

JACQUETTE
A Sorority Girl



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*Jacquette,
A Sorority Girl*





Little by little the story of the evening came out

Jacquette

A Sorority Girl

BY
GRACE ETHELWYN CODY

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES JOHNSON POST



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To
My Mother

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*Jacquette,
A Sorority Girl*

CHAPTER I

JACQUETTE

IT was nine o'clock in the evening when a heavy train rolled into the Union Station of a great western city. Among the passengers to alight was a fair-haired girl who glanced timidly about the big, cavernous station before falling in with the procession of travellers that had begun to move toward the waiting-room. Suddenly, one face shone clearly from among the indiscriminate mass of faces outside the iron gates, and she gave a glad little cry, as a tall boy stepped forward, caught her suitcase from her, and grasped her hand.

“Jacquette, isn't it?” he exclaimed, his dark eyes shining with welcome. “I'd know you anywhere from your pictures.”

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"But I shouldn't know you!" she answered. "I'd no idea you were so big and—and grand!" she finished, roguishly.

"As for that, I am rather grand, tonight," he laughed, stealing admiring glances at her as he led the way through the crowded station to the street. "I'm down here in the governor's new auto to meet a long-lost country cousin, and I find a fairy princess, instead. What more could a fellow ask?"

"Not an automobile! Truly? I've never been in one, yet."

"Oh, well, you'll do a lot of things in Channing that you never did in Brookdale. Here's the machine. Just step in and be comfortable while I look after your baggage."

He gave an order to the respectful chauffeur and disappeared into the station, while Jacquette Willard looked after him, feeling that she had suddenly entered a new world. She sat up very straight, brushing

Jacquette

a bit of lint from the jacket of her wine-coloured travelling-gown, and, more than once, she patted the sunny mist of hair about her face, and put both hands to the jaunty hat, to make sure that it was poised exactly as it should be. In a few minutes her tall cousin came back and seated himself beside her, and then they went spinning along the brilliantly lighted streets toward her uncle's home.

"It seems like a fairy story to me, Quis," she said, looking up at him with a shy smile.

"Didn't I tell you you were the princess?" Marquis answered gaily. "Do you know?—there's a pink rose in our conservatory that looks just like you, only it lacks the eyes—poor rose! Your pictures showed your hair was curly, but they didn't tell the gold colour of it, and those stunning braids didn't show, either. Wonder if the girls will make you put up your hair?"

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“What girls?”

“Oh, the bunch I’ll show you, to-morrow morning. Nicest girls in Marston High.”

“High school, do you mean?”

“Yes; we never stop to put on the school, though. Everybody knows Marston. It’s famous all through the west for its football team. I’m mighty glad you came while I’m a senior here, instead of waiting till next year when I’ll be off at college. I can give you no end of pointers. By the way, I liked it just now, when you said ‘Quis.’ I suppose you know about your mother and my father getting our Frenchy sounding names out of the same old novel? Funny, wasn’t it? I have to answer to ‘Markee’ about half the time. The fellows do it to guy me. I wonder what you’d think if I should call you ‘Jack’?”

“I’d like it,” she agreed, promptly. “I never had a nickname.”

Jacquette

“All right, that’s settled. Don’t you think it’s queer we feel so well acquainted, just from the letters we’ve written? Do you realise that it’s twelve years since I even saw you? We lived abroad ten whole years, you know. Mother was saying, last night, that I’d spent two years more of my life in Europe than in this country, so far. I’m a pretty good American, though, for all that. The last two years here in Channing seem worth more than the whole ten on the other side. My father feels the same way, too, and he’s mighty happy to think that you and Aunt Sula and grandfather are coming to live so near us.”

“And perhaps we’re not happy about it too! You ought to hear the plans Aunt Sula and I have made for this winter. We’re going to make the most of the chance to hear good music, and see all the exhibitions at the Art Institute, for one thing.”

“Whew! How cultured we are!”

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

"We aren't, yet, but wait!" Jacquette laughed. Then she added, seriously, "Our plans aren't all selfish, though. We're hoping we can interest grandfather in some of the new things, and make him happier. He has been so lonely since grandmother died, Quis."

"I suppose he has. How soon are they coming?"

"Oh, it will be six weeks or two months before Aunt Sula can settle up things and leave Brookdale. I ought to be there to help her, but she was so anxious to have me begin school the first day that she made me come."

"Then you're going to stay at our house six weeks or more. That's great. Perhaps you'll make up your mind to live with us all the time after this."

"Aunt Sula wouldn't hear of that," Jacquette said, smiling. "She thinks I belong to her as much as if I were her very own daughter. I guess I do, too. She's

Jacquette

taken care of me ever since I was three years old, you know."

"Three!" Marquis repeated, in a softened tone. "Were you that little when your father and mother died, Jack?"

She nodded, a wistful look creeping into the hazel eyes, and they were both silent for a little. The automobile had turned on to a fashionable boulevard, and was skimming along like the wind. Presently a grey stone house loomed before them.

"Here we are!" cried Marquis—and, a minute later, Uncle Mac and Aunt Fanny were welcoming the Brookdale niece to their city home.

Aunt Fanny was tall and distinguished looking. Quis was like her; Jacquette saw that at a glance. Uncle Mac was stout and blue-eyed—and dear and kind.

After the first greetings he held his niece off at arm's length, and looked deep into her eyes.

"Your mother's own girl," he said,

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with a mist in his voice. "Fanny, let's keep her for ours after this."

"At any rate, we shall be very glad to keep her for ours until Father Granville and Sula come, Malcolm," Aunt Fanny answered in even tones, and Jacquette, glancing shyly up at the white profile of her statuesque, dark-haired aunt, felt, suddenly, that she knew who ruled her uncle's home.

Mrs. Malcolm Granville was a woman who prided herself on her practical common sense, and, though she was very willing to receive Jacquette into her luxurious home for a visit, she had no intention of allowing her husband to put any foolish ideas, even for a minute, into the mind of his niece. As she reasoned, Jacquette, with the modest inheritance left to her by her father, was very suitably placed in the unpretentious home of her grandfather and unmarried aunt, and there was no good reason for saying or doing anything which

Jacquette

might cause her to feel discontented with this arrangement.

As a matter of fact, there was not the slightest danger. Jacquette was too devotedly attached to her adopted mother to consider, for a moment, the thought of leaving her, and she felt an impulse to tell Aunt Fanny so on the spot, but she controlled it, and, after a few days, she learned, as people always did, to make allowances for Aunt Fanny's "way," and to appreciate her kindness, in spite of it.

"Now I'm going to carry this girl straight off to bed," Aunt Fanny declared, presently, after Jacquette, relieved of her wraps and seated in a rocker before the fireplace in the library, had been served with a dainty tray of refreshments. "You see she can't eat a mouthful, even though she confesses to not having taken dinner on the train. I believe she has swallowed three sips of milk and one nibble of that roll, altogether. She's tired and excited,

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and the longer she stays here answering your questions, Malcolm, the more tired she'll be."

"Oh, mother, it's disgracefully early!" Marquis protested, but Uncle Malcolm, leaning back in his big leather chair, smiled good-naturedly.

"Guess you're right, Fanny," he agreed. "If she's going to begin school to-morrow morning, the sooner those pretty eyes are shut, the better."

"There won't be any school-work to speak of, the first day—nothing but fun—and I had forty things more to say to her," Marquis was still grumbling as he rose to say good-night, but his mother's word was law, and even Marquis grudgingly admitted her wisdom, next morning, when he saw the bright, rosy girl that emerged from the good night's rest. As he started for school with Jacquette, after breakfast, he turned and looked her over with a smile of satisfaction.

Jacquette

“Well, what is it? Country cousin?” she asked him, saucily.

“Not much! I meant ‘fairy princess’ when I said it. I was just thinking that if your dress were an inch or two longer, you’d look precious little like a freshy.”

“There’s a double hem in all of them, to let out if I need to,” Jacquette confided to him, “but Aunt Sula thought they were long enough for fifteen.”

“Oh, well, the Sigma Pi girls will post you on all those matters.”

“The Sigma what?”

“That’s your sorority—Sigma Pi Epsilon. I’ve arranged with the girls to rush you, first thing, and they’re sure to bid you in a few days.”

“To bid me?”

“I’ll bet you don’t know what a sorority is! Oh, Brookdale, Brookdale! Think of a fairy princess buried in Brookdale! Why, every high school worthy of the name, nowadays, has its Greek-letter so-

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cieties, and at Marston, we have more fraternities and sororities than I could tell you about in an hour. The only ones worth mentioning, though, are the ones with national charters. The little local ones are punk. The people that can't make the nationals, go into them. But it goes without saying that the sorority I'm going to get you into is the most exclusive set in the school. Wait till you see the girls."

"Why, Quis, I do know about secret societies in schools. I've read a lot about the teachers opposing them."

"Yes, I suppose you have—but they haven't any right to do it. Is it their business to forbid our joining a club, provided our parents are willing? As for the Channing Board of Education, I guess we've hushed it up for one while. It made a rule, last year, shutting off fraternity and sorority members from a lot of high school privileges—trying to freeze out

Jacquette

secret societies that way, you see—and we just took up a collection and hired a first-class lawyer and got an injunction against their enforcing that rule. They haven't any legal right to do such a thing."

Jacquette listened with a growing sense of her own lack of information. "But don't you think there's anything, then, in all this fuss about fraternities making class distinctions in school?" she asked cautiously.

"Not a thing! I'll tell you how it is: All the fellows that are really worth anything get into some fraternity or other—and the same with the girls."

They turned a corner and came within sight of Marston High School. It was a large grey stone building, rising abruptly from the street and separated from it only by two railed-in grass plots, one on each side of the walk leading to the main entrance. A few scrub oaks, straggling relics of the old forest which had once

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flourished where the hurrying, striving city now stood, shaded the windows at the south, but, except for these, everything was bare—as different as possible from the pleasant grounds surrounding the little Brookdale school.

“Oh, are we here?” Jacquette cried. “I wanted to ask you about planning my course, Quis.”

“Lots of time for that,” he told her. “You won’t do a thing but be rushed, to-day.”

“And just what is being ‘rushed,’ please?”

“Here’s somebody that will show you,” he answered, coming to a sudden stop on the sidewalk in front of the school building, where a group of girls were talking together.

They greeted Marquis gaily, and Jacquette’s name had hardly been pronounced before they came fluttering about her like butterflies. After a minute, Marquis

Jacquette

laughingly withdrew, promising to look her up later.

Jacquette had never experienced anything like this. She was flattered and petted, her "beautiful braids" envied, her "lovely colour" raved over, while she was being presented to this and that girl, and yielded reluctantly by one to the other, until she had met about twenty.

There the introductions stopped. Plenty of other girls and boys were standing about, or passing in and out of the school building, but it was evident that she was to meet no one outside of this particular set, to-day. She was satisfied, though, for she had begun to believe what Marquis had said about these being the nicest girls in Marston High.

As she stood there in the warm September sunshine, she found herself taking notes of the silk and muslin gowns worn by these new friends, and of the elaborate styles of hair-dressing. One richly-dressed

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girl, who had been introduced as Blanche Gross, was describing a forty-dollar hat that she had bought "just to wear in the house, at teas and receptions." Jacquette, fresh from Brookdale, wondered what Aunt Sula would say to that. She wished Quis had told her that hats were not worn outdoors in Channing. Not one of the girls had any covering on her head.

The chatter about her went on merrily. Now and then a new girl was brought into the charmed circle, and passed around, just as Jacquette had been, but no one seemed to think of going into school. Jacquette did not quite understand; she was only sure that it was all fascinating, and that she was glad to be a part of it.

"Don't we go in to see about our classes, pretty soon?" she asked, presently, of Louise Markham, a jolly, stylish-looking senior in a white linen suit, who seemed to have taken her especially under her wing.

"Oh, no!"—Etta Brainerd, the talka-

Jacquette

tive girl of the crowd spoke before Louise could answer—"Sorority girls never register until second day."

"But we may have to reform our ways in that respect, girls," laughed Louise. "Did you know the Board of Education took off five teachers from Marston faculty, last year, because the enrollment of pupils on the first day was only a thousand? Next day, you know, after the rest of us had registered, there were nearly fifteen hundred, and the teachers didn't like it a bit. It made their work so much harder."

"Oh, they always fuss about something," said Etta, carelessly. "We have to take care of the interests of our sorority, first day. Guess we aren't going to let the Kappa Delts run off with the best girls, while we're registering!"

Etta was the tallest girl in the group. Her brown hair was drawn to the top of her head in a fluffy knot, and her skirts

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almost touched the ground. As she spoke, she was readjusting the sorority pin on the front of her white lace waist. "It has to be exactly over the heart," she explained, with a smile, as she saw Jacquette watching her.

"We're going to have a spread after a while, and we want you to come," Louise murmured to Jacquette. "That's what 'rushing' means. Quis said I should tell you. We pick out the girls we think we may want, and give them a good time—spreads and so on—and then, if we find they're all right, we bid them Sigma Pi—ask them to join, you know."

But while Louise was speaking, Jacquette had suddenly recognised a girl who had spent the summer with an aunt in Brookdale, a few years earlier.

"Margaret Howland!" she cried, darting forward and catching her by the arm.

"Jacquette Willard! Where did you drop down from?"

Jacquette

Jacquette wondered, as she explained, at the curious expression which crossed Margaret's face. "I never dreamed you went to this school," Jacquette finished. "I was going to look you up the first chance I had, but now we'll see each other every day. Isn't it splendid?"

"Yes, I'm awfully glad to see you, but——" Margaret hesitated.

"'But,' you're so big you can't play with a little freshy?"

"No, indeed! But I'm afraid, if Quis Granville is your cousin——"

"Jack!" a surprised voice interrupted, and, turning, Jacquette found Quis looking down at her in unmistakable disapproval. "Good morning, Miss Howland," he added, lifting his cap to Margaret. "Excuse my cousin, will you? Some of the girls want her."

It was done in a twinkling. Margaret was swallowed up in the bevy of girls who had gathered about while she talked with

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Jacquette, and Marquis carried off his cousin in gleeful triumph.

“What in the world!” he began, as soon as they were out of earshot. “How did she ever get you?”

“Get me? What do you mean?” Jacquette protested. “That’s Margaret Howland—a darling girl I knew in Brookdale, three years ago.”

“The mischief you did! She’s one of the strongest workers in Kappa Delta, and you mustn’t have a thing to do with her at this stage of the game, or you’ll lose all your chances with the Sigma Pi girls. Now, mind, Jack, you’re new here. I know the ground and you won’t be sorry if you take my advice. My frat is Beta Sigma, the best in school—hardest to get into, finest frat house, highest dues, and all that. The only sorority that ranks with it is Sigma Pi Epsilon. I want you to have the best. Understand?” And, as he ended, he handed her over to Louise Markham,

Jacquette

whose laugh had rippled out gaily when she saw them coming.

"I'll not let her get away again," she told Marquis, her dark eyes twinkling as she put one arm around Jacquette. "We love her too much, already, to trust her in the enemy's camp."

"Indeed we do!" chorussed half a dozen girls, gathering about, and, before she realised what was happening, Jacquette had been bewitched into forgetting all about Margaret.

The morning passed, and when the noon hour came, the girls adjourned to the Sigma Pi spread. It was given at Etta Brainerd's house, and Jacquette found that it meant sandwiches and salads, hot chocolate, olives, cake, ice-cream and candy, all served picnic fashion, with sorority songs, and laughter and chatter. When the party dispersed, late in the afternoon, some one whispered to Jacquette that she was to stay, and, as soon as the

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other guests had gone, the Sigma Pi girls gathered about and told her that they had decided to ask her to join their sorority.

Then Louise Markham, who had completely won Jacquette's heart, walked home with her to tell Quis what a success she had been with the girls, and to charge him that he must help her with an important letter which she was to write to her Aunt Sula that evening.

Accordingly, after dinner, Marquis and Jacquette retired to the library for consultation.

Jacquette took up a pen. "Tia Mia," were the first words she wrote.

"What's that?" Quis demanded, looking over her shoulder.

"Tee-ah mee-ah," pronounced Jacquette. "It's Spanish for 'my aunt.' We found it in a book, and I thought it was cunning; so 'Tia' has been my pet name for Aunt Sula ever since."

"Oh! Well, go on," Quis consented,

Jacquette

and after much re-writing, this was the letter they sent:

“Tia Mia,

“The first day at school has been simply glorious and now I have a great favour to ask. *Don't* refuse it! I have been asked to join the nicest girls' club in Mars-ton High School. May I do it? Of course I'd rather wait till you are here and could know the girls, too, but Quis says I ought to accept when I'm asked, as it's a great compliment, and they may never invite me again. It's called a so-rority—a sisterhood, you know—and it stands for the highest ideals in scholarship and everything else.

“Darling, please, *please* don't make me lose this chance of being closely associated with the very best girls, just because you're not here to judge for yourself. Trust me.

“I don't know what the dues will be, but

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not large, Quis thinks, and I could pay them out of the money set aside for my education. It's really a part of my high school education, they seem to think, here.

“Please say yes, dearest, and by return mail.

“Always the same love,

“Your Girl.”

CHAPTER II

MADEMOISELLE

NEXT morning dawned bright and clear—another day like midsummer—and, when Jacquette began to dress, a remark that Louise had made on the way home from the spread the night before, came into her mind.

“This is your travelling suit, isn’t it?” Louise had said. “It’s so appropriate—plain and dark! I love plain things for travelling, don’t you?”

With this in her thoughts, Jacquette discarded the simple shirt-waist suit she had intended to wear, and took out, instead, a fluffy rose-coloured mull, which Aunt Sula had advised her to put on often for dinner, while she was visiting at Uncle Malcolm’s.

She felt repaid for the change when she saw Aunt Fanny’s welcoming smile and

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Quis's glance of admiration, at breakfast. Uncle Mac studied her without comment, but, just as she was starting for school, he put his arm around her and whispered, tenderly,

"Your mother's own daughter—that's what you are! Don't let 'em spoil you with their secret societies and things. Keep your pretty head level."

The pretty head, hatless this morning, nodded confidently as Jacquette tripped away at Marquis's side.

Louise Markham joined them at the corner, and, a block or two farther on, Marquis excused himself to walk with a boy who had met them at one of the cross-streets.

"We needn't feel jealous," Louise said, with a smile, as Marquis left them. "It isn't because he prefers Clarence Mullen's company to ours."

"What made him go, then?" Jacquette asked.

Mademoiselle

“Oh, business! The Beta Sigs want to pledge that little fellow, and two or three other fraternities are after him, too, so Quis couldn’t lose this chance of courting him.”

“But, Louise, that boy has such a queer, sly-looking face! I thought so the minute I saw him. Is he nice?”

Louise shrugged her shoulders good-naturedly. “His father has loads of money and a ball-room in his house.”

“You don’t mean to say that Quis’s fraternity would choose a boy for those things?”

There was a scandalised note in Jacqueline’s voice, and Louise laughed.

“Not really,” she said. “I don’t actually know anything against that Mullen boy, but somehow, I feel just as you do about him—creepy—and I can’t help thinking that his father’s financial position may have a little to do with all the fraternities rushing him so hard. Maybe

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that's unjust. I don't know—but I do know, Jacquette, that when a girl can look as much like a flower as you do in that pink dress, she has no business ever to wear plain things."

"Oh, Louise!" Jacquette protested, looking more like a flower than ever, as they turned into the school entrance, and walked up to the office to register.

When they came out into the hall again, Louise said, "Well, you're assigned to room 17, I see. That means you're going to bloom in Mademoiselle's rose-garden. I 'most wish I were a freshman or sophomore, so I could be there with you. We seniors have to go up on the top floor."

"What is Mademoiselle's rose garden?"

"Come in here and see," was the answer, as Louise led Jacquette into room 17 and straight to Mademoiselle Dubois's desk, where a half dozen pupils were standing in line, waiting for the French teacher to assign them seats in her study room.



*Just as she was starting for school, Uncle Mac
put his arms around her*

Mademoiselle

Mademoiselle, a slight figure dressed in black, was writing busily, but, after a moment, she lifted her head and fixed a pair of searching eyes on Jacquette. Instantly, the girl was conscious of a forceful character, masked by a dimpling face, which revealed nothing.

“Jacquette Willard,” Mademoiselle repeated after Louise, in honeyed tones. “A little French name, is it not? But it is not a little French girl? No? Ah, a cousin of Marquis Granville, did you say? My cunning chicken, I am charmed to meet you! You are going to be my child, for I know your cousin well, and, indeed, I am so fond of that little wretch!”

Jacquette gasped, and, before she could stammer a word in reply, Louise’s laugh had bubbled forth.

“Your old abominable laugh, my sweet pet,” Mademoiselle chided, turning to Louise and speaking in the same mellifluous voice. “You have carried it through

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high school, and you will carry it into womanhood. It is scandalous, dearie. You shall have that seat next the aisle, my little plum-tree," she added, addressing Jacquette again. "The one in the second row, honey, and Louise, the dear child, shall help you make out your programme for the quarter. You see that all the classes and all the hours are plainly written on the board, don't you, dearie? Go now, Louise, and help the little Willard, before the bell rings."

"There! How do you like Mademoiselle?" Louise whispered, as soon as they were seated. "All the other teachers in high school call you 'Miss'—but not Mademoiselle! She makes you feel, just at first, as if you'd dropped back into kindergarten, but don't deceive yourself—you haven't! There isn't a more respected, better obeyed teacher in Marston than Mademoiselle Dubois, and, as for French, what she doesn't know about it isn't worth learn-

Mademoiselle

ing. Did you notice how she spoke about my laugh? She's just right. I can't control it to save my life. But isn't she great?"

"Great—I should think she was!" Jacquette agreed, impulsively. "I'm afraid of her and I like her at the same minute. 'My cunning chicken'! Louise, I've had one year of French at home; I hope I can take my second year with her."

"All right; let's plan it that way." And the girls fell to work on Jacquette's programme.

Tap, tap, tap, sounded on Mademoiselle's desk, when they had nearly finished.

"Now, my little flock," said the small Frenchwoman, standing behind her desk to address the roomful of fifty young people, whose ages ranged from fifteen to eighteen. "My sweet pets"—she paused and dimpled—"at the beginning of the year, I will explain to you the meaning of

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the bells. You see, I never have the least particle of trouble with the dear children who study in my room—not the least particle—after I have once explained the meaning of the bells. It is this: First bell, no walking; second bell, no talking; and third bell”—her voice had dropped almost to a whisper—“when the third bell rings, in Mademoiselle’s room, it is always as *still as a little rose garden!*”

“What did I tell you?” murmured Louise. “See how they strain their ears to catch every word she says.”

“If I hear any voice,” Mademoiselle’s hushed tones went on, after she had cast one keen glance at Louise, “if there is ever any sound at all, I know it must be an echo from that bad room across the hall, for my children never give me the least particle of trouble—the sweet pets!

“Very good. You are just as I knew you would be, dear children. Now, Alice, honey, when you registered yesterday, did

Mademoiselle

you not ask to be excused from drawing, this quarter? ”

“ Yes, Mademoiselle Dubois,” answered a tall, serious looking sophomore, who had evidently met Mademoiselle, before.

“ Well, sweet pet, did you bring your note of excuse from mamma, to-day? ”

“ No, Mademoiselle, I forgot it.”

“ I am so sorry, Alice, because you see, dearie, you must go right home after it, and that means you will miss the first and second period—both recitations for you—and that means ”—lingeringly and lovingly—“ that means two—little—zeros! And you see, Alice, that it always pays, in Mademoiselle’s room, for her dear little peacocks to do everything just at the right little minute, because, if they don’t, it means t-r-o-t, trot!”

She pointed a tiny finger at the door, and, to Jacquette’s wondering amazement, tall Alice meekly departed.

As the door closed behind her, Made-

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moiselle assumed a meditative expression. "There are three people talking in this room at present," she said softly, addressing a distant spot on the ceiling. "I am one of them; I wonder who the other two could be! Chester!" she added, suddenly, fixing her eyes on a corner of the room where a sly whispering was in progress. "Take your books, honey, and come to this row at once. No, not there," she demurred, as the big, broad-shouldered fellow sheepishly obeyed. "I reserve those seats for my French class, and if you should be studying there, and I should imagine you were one of my French class who was not paying attention, you might get your sweet little ears boxed! Now, as I was about to say, when I was so *rudely* interrupted——"

But the things Mademoiselle wished to say had to be postponed, for the bell sounded, and the pupils of her second year French class—some from her own room,

Mademoiselle

and some from other rooms—began to assemble in the front rows. Louise gave Jacquette's hand a farewell squeeze, and hurried away to a class of her own on the upper floor, while Jacquette, left alone for the first time, shyly took her place among Mademoiselle's pupils, wondering, as she did so, whether she was likely to get her "sweet little ears boxed" by sitting at the wrong desk.

The French recitation proved to be a taking of stock, by Mademoiselle, of her class's stage of advancement, but it served, at the same time, to fix in the minds of those who had not worked with her before, the necessity of keeping eyes and ears open.

Early in the hour, she called on Arline Grant, a much be-curled young lady, to give the rule under which a certain word preceded the verb in a French sentence they were discussing.

Arline was silent.

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

“Class,” said Mademoiselle, “We will sing for Arline a little song that we learned at the beginning of our first year in French. All together, ready! First verse” (chanting): “Pronoun objects come before the verb! Second verse: Pronoun objects come before the verb! Third verse: Pronoun objects come before the verb! Chorus: Pronoun objects come before the verb! Now, Arline, do you know the little rule, my pet?”

Arline gave it.

“Triumph No. 1!” Mademoiselle exclaimed brightly. “We have taught Arline something!” Then she looked sharply at her book, and said in a surprised tone, “I notice ‘mon amie’ printed in the next sentence! ‘Mon’—a masculine pronoun—when the ‘friend’ referred to is feminine. A misprint, is it not? Scratch it out, everyone of you, and write the feminine ‘ma’ in its place.”

The pupils obediently made the change.

Mademoiselle

“Class, rise,” Mademoiselle commanded, and the class rose.

“Now, all who scratched that out, sit down,” she continued, and everyone except Jacquette sat down.

“My little Willard!” said Mademoiselle, in evident surprise. “What are *you* walking around here for?”

“Because I didn’t scratch it out,” Jacquette replied, blushing furiously.

“And why not?” The deep dimples appeared in Mademoiselle’s cheeks.

“Because the pronoun ‘mon’ retains the masculine form before a feminine noun beginning with a vowel or h mute,” Jacquette faltered, frightened almost out of her voice at finding herself the only one who knew it.

“Excellent, dearie! I am charmed! You may be seated. And for the rest of you—zero!” Mademoiselle pronounced, dramatically. “I don’t wonder you look chagrined, my pets,” she added, “but you

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

must remember that, in Mademoiselle Dubois's classes, it pays to keep your wits about you."

"Well, Mademoiselle," one of the boys protested, with a shamefaced grin, "it's mighty hard for us to keep track of all those little things. Now, there's another point bothers me; the same word has so many different meanings in French. How are we going to tell them apart?"

"Honey, how can I *bear* to have you ask me so many silly questions!" Mademoiselle answered, instantly, folding her arms high on her chest as she spoke. "Now, listen: There is a big—black—animal, with long—fuzzy—hair, which our President loves to shoot—alas! Do you know the two meanings I gave to the word 'bear' in that remark?"

"Why, y-yes," Clarence stammered, "The way you used it shows."

Mademoiselle suddenly waved her hand at him as one tosses farewell to a baby.

Mademoiselle

“Also in French, honey!” she told him, brightly.

All this was very entertaining to Jacquette, so much so that her algebra class, which met in the next hour and was taught by the dignified Mr. Pettingill, might have seemed dull except for the fact that she sat next to Etta Brainerd, who wrote her note after note and slipped them into her hand during the class period.

It seemed, Jacquette learned while Mr. Pettingill imagined he was teaching her algebra, that the Kappa Deltas were extremely anxious to get her into their sorority, on account of Margaret Howland's former friendship with her, and that they were planning to ask her to their spread that afternoon. To outwit them, the Sigma Pi girls proposed to put their colours—pale blue and gold—on Jacquette, even before her Aunt Sula's consent should come. In that way she could appear to be already pledged to them, and

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

could have a good reason for declining the Kappa Delta's invitation.

As soon as the half-hour for luncheon came, the Sigma Pi girls gathered around Jacquette.

"We're not asking you to sign the pledge without your guardian's permission, you understand, dear," said Louise Markham, holding the blue and gold ribbons in one hand and the enamelled pledge pin in the other. "You simply promise, by wearing our colours this way, that if you ever do go any sorority, it will be Sigma Pi."

And the end of it was that, when a delegation of Kappa Deltas, headed by Margaret Howland, came after Jacquette, a few minutes later, they found her wearing the blue and gold.

"I'm dreadfully sorry we can't be in the same sorority," she told Margaret, honestly, "but my cousin thinks——"

"That's just why I want you to meet

Mademoiselle

our girls," Margaret argued. "Your cousin isn't giving you a chance to judge for yourself."

"That will do, Margaret!" exclaimed Etta Brainerd, stepping out of the close background, where she had been lingering to protect the Sigma Pi "pledge." "I hate to say anything, because I know Jacquette used to think a great deal of you, but you know as well as anyone that it isn't honourable to try to get another sorority's pledge to come to your spreads."

Then, without giving Jacquette time to do more than cast an apologetic backward glance at Margaret, Etta carried her off out of harm's way.

Marquis was delighted, that night, when he saw the Sigma Pi colours pinned over Jacquette's heart, and heard her story of the day.

"You did exactly right," he told her. "It shows the Kappa Delts, once for all, just where you stand, and another thing

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

I like about it is that it proves the Sigma Pi girls are dead anxious to get you. Oh, you're all right, fairy princess!"

And Jacquette glowed with pleasure at his words.

The hours dragged slowly for a few days, after that, in spite of all the absorbing new happenings. It was because Aunt Sula's answer was being waited for, but it came, at last, and Jacquette waved it wildly out of her bedroom window at Louise Markham, who happened to be passing.

"Louise! Louise! She says yes!" she cried, joyfully.

"Hurrah!" Louise called back. "I can't stop, now, but I'm proper glad. A delegation of us will be over to-night to pledge you, dear."

Then Jacquette sat down alone and read Aunt Sula's "yes" all through again.

"About the girls' club you speak of,"

Mademoiselle

the letter said, "If it really must be decided before I come, I am going to leave it to you. You are almost a woman, now, and must begin to make your own decisions.

"I am assuming, of course, that Uncle Mac and Aunt Fanny approve, but, at the same time, I want you to use your own mind—not theirs—in forming your opinion. Find out, definitely, about the expense connected with it, and be sure, from all standpoints, that you are not doing anything you may regret later.

"Loving you always,

"Tia."

CHAPTER III

TIA

WHO mended the rip in my glove?" Jacquette demanded, as she stood in her coat and hat, ready to start for school. "Tia, you angel! Stop hiding behind that paper!"

A pair of brown eyes laughed over the top of the newspaper. Then a slight woman in a dark red morning gown, emerged into sight. "I do feel guilty," she admitted, roguishly. "I ought to have trained you so well that you'd have mended it yourself."

"Oh, I think you've done pretty well, considering the material you had to work on," was the light-hearted answer, and Jacquette stopped to rearrange her hat before the mantel mirror as she spoke. "You don't know how afraid I was all

Tia

day yesterday that some of the sorority girls would call me to account for that glove! They're frightfully particular about such things."

"Do they mind little things like a button missing from a shoe?" Aunt Sula asked, demurely. "If they do, I think I'll petition them to labour with someone I know."

"Oh, dear, does that show? I didn't think it could with this long dress. It seems to me I can't get time to do the things I ought to."

Two months of school had gone, and Jacquette was living, with her grandfather and Aunt Sula, in a comfortable little home only a few blocks from Malcolm Granville's large one. The pearl-set blue and gold pin, worn over her heart, proclaimed that she had been initiated into her sorority, and her beautiful hair, tucked up in the back of her neck, and thoroughly hidden by the conventional big bow, was

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

witness to the fact that the Sigma Pi girls considered long, curly braids too childish.

Not only had all the dresses brought from Brookdale been lengthened, but Aunt Fannie, prompted by Uncle Mac's fondness for his pretty niece, had amused herself by buying several new gowns for her, so that Aunt Sula, whose loving interest had gone into every garment Jacquette had worn since she was a tiny girl, felt an odd pang as she gazed after the smart young woman who started for school, morning after morning, in unfamiliar costumes.

Sula Granville had not married, but her heart was a mother heart, and the love she felt for this child of her only sister was mother love. Ever since she came to Channing, she had been missing Jacquette's sunny presence about the house, missing the spirit of helpful comradeship which she had grown to depend on in the Brookdale home, but, at the same time, she

Tia

had realised that Jacquette was breathlessly busy from eight in the morning, when she started for high school, until ten and after, every night, and the more she studied the condition, the more helpless she found herself in coping with it.

“I know how full your time is,” she sympathised, now; “couldn’t you plan to come home right after school, to-day, and do some of the left-overs?”

“Sorority meeting, Tia.”

“I thought that was last Monday.”

“That was a special. This is the regular one, and it’s a matter of loyalty to go. We have to pay a fine if we’re not there. And, to-morrow, Tia, there’ll be rush doings—a spread, you know—that will last till dinner time. And oh, by the way, I want Molly to iron my lace waist so that I can wear it to-morrow. The Kappa Delts are working awfully hard to get this girl we’re after, and it’s understood that we’re to sport up when we give a spread,

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

so the new girls will get the impression that Sigma Pi is the nicest bunch there is."

"Oh! A girl chooses her sorority by the way its members dress, does she?"

"Tia, that's teasing! First impressions do count, you know."

"I see. Well, this begins like a gay week. See what the postman brought, just now. Uncle Mac has sent us tickets for the concert, Wednesday afternoon, because he noticed that the orchestra was going to play some of the Grieg music you worked at so hard, last year. Wasn't he good?"

A worried frown puckered Jacquette's forehead. "It was dear of him," she said. "But we Sigma Pi girls have promised to go up and work in the new sorority rooms after school, Wednesday and Thursday both. There are pillows to make and curtains to hem and no end of things to do."

"Oh! Well, we can change the tickets to Friday."

Tia

“That won’t do either.” Jacquette looked a little shame-faced as she said it. “Friday afternoon we all have to sew on the new robes we are making for the initiation, and Saturday, the initiation takes all day, you know. So there it is, every afternoon this week taken, and Wednesday night Quis wants to bring a Beta Sig friend of his over here, and then I told the girls I’d make my pillow for the sorority rooms before Saturday. That will take at least two evenings, and you know, Tia, I have to keep a *little* time for studying!”

The apologetic tone of this last statement was too much for Aunt Sula. “Have to keep time for studying besides doing all that sorority work?” she asked, with an air of gentle surprise.

Jacquette pouted, and then laughed. “You make me think of Mademoiselle! Yesterday, there was an announcement of a basket-ball game on the blackboard, and down at the foot it said, ‘Come, girls, and

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

help us yell!’ She looked at it; then she said, in her sweet, soft voice. ‘Come—girls—and help us—*yell!* So refined! So suggestive of a lady! Come—girls—and help us—*yell!*’ Not another word, and wasn’t I glad I hadn’t written it! But that gentle sarcasm belongs to her. It doesn’t to you, Tia.”

“Doesn’t it?” Aunt Sula leaned forward and took her girl’s hands in both of hers. “Then I’ll say it in my own way. Jacquette, I am making up my mind that I’m sorry you joined the sorority.”

“Oh, you mustn’t speak like that to me, Tia! It’s disloyalty to Sigma Pi to listen to it. Say anything you want to about me, but I can’t let you talk against my sorority. There’s Louise!” Jacquette added, brightening suddenly, as the Sigma Pi whistle sounded outside. “I’ll have to go, dearest. Good-bye.” And off she flew.

“Hurry!” Louise called, as Jacquette came down the steps. “Quis was here, but

Tia

he couldn't wait. The boys told him there were things doing over at school."

"What kind of things?" Jacquette asked, half running to keep up.

"Oh, the senior boys are up to something again. You know last week they painted those big, white 'Naughty-eights' all over the side-walks and the juniors worked all night, I guess, scrubbing them off with turpentine, and putting 'Naughty-nines' in their place. Quis wanted to drop it, then. He's class president, you know, and wants to keep things dignified, but some of the boys wouldn't stop, and——"

"Look there!" Jacquette exclaimed, suddenly, as, from two blocks away, both girls beheld a monster Indian in war-paint and feathers, limply hanging by his neck to the flagstaff on the topmost peak of the school building. A placard adorned his chest, bearing, in huge letters, the legend, "'09."

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

“That’s what they’ve done! Hanged the junior class in effigy. But how did they ever get it up there?”

As the girls neared the school, a cluster of their Sigma Pi sisters opened almost silently to receive them. Everybody was crowding around Mr. Branch, the principal, to hear what he was saying. Marquis, as class president, had just disavowed all knowledge of the prank.

“That hung there all day yesterday, to amuse people on their way to church,” said Mr. Branch in a tone of annoyance. “It’s a break-neck climb, but the one who put it up knows how to get it down!”

A silence fell.

“Who did it?” he challenged, after a pause, and then a boy who had just come racing down the street, elbowed his way through the crowd, and took off his hat to the principal.

“I did, sir,” he said.

Mr. Branch looked into the frank, sun-

Tia

burned face. "You ought to be past such foolishness, Drake," he replied, gravely, but the sternness had suddenly gone from his voice. "You're a senior, this year, remember. I shall expect you to take it down at the noon hour."

"Who is that boy, Louise?" Jacquette asked, eagerly, as Mr. Branch strode into the building and the pupils went trooping after.

"That's Bobs Drake, the captain of the football team and idol of the school. Didn't you notice Mr. Branch when he looked at him? That's the way with all the teachers. They can't be cross with Bobs more than a minute at a time."

"Shouldn't think they could! He's splendid. But how is he ever going to bring that Indian down?"

"We'll see how at noon. I'll wait for you at this door," said Louise, as they parted.

Promptly at twelve, the two girls hur-

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

ried out, just in time to see Bobs Drake throwing off his coat and buttoning his blue sweater close. The ring of boys and girls around him was growing thicker every minute.

“I know where there’s a ladder, Bobs,” some one volunteered.

“No, thank you,” said Bobs, cheerfully, and, without an instant’s hesitation, he began shinning up an oak tree, whose branches grazed the school windows. From a perch in that, he swung himself lightly to an addition which leaned against the main building, and, safely landed there, made a low bow to the admiring crowd now gathered. After that, by the aid of window ledges and cornices, he clambered to the many-gabled roof and began to climb—nimble, cautiously.

The late October wind crackled with a brittle sound through the yellow-brown leaves of the oaks. It flapped sharply at the girls’ gowns, as they stood there with

Tia

the cold autumn sunlight shining down on their upturned faces. Suddenly, a gust of it snatched Bobs's cap from his head, and swept it a block away before the best runners in Marston could capture it, but sure-footed Bobs, undisturbed, stood up on the highest gable, in the midst of an exultant shout from his spectators, and calmly watched the race to the end, before he knelt again, and crept carefully, slowly, along the last ridge-pole, straight to the Indian's side!

"'Rah for Bobs! Bobs! Bobs! Bobs!" came from below, and then a silence fell while everyone watched to see what he would do next. Before they had seen, it was done. Whipping a ball of heavy twine from his pocket, Bobs had tied one end around the Indian's neck, had cut the cords which bound him to the flag-staff, and was swiftly lowering him down the front of the building.

With a whoop, seniors and juniors

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

closed upon the helpless dummy, but, in the end, the seniors triumphed, and bore the abject Indian, torn limb from limb, to a vacant field near by, where they promptly set fire to him.

It was a tame cremation, though, with few spectators, for all the girls and most of the boys had lingered to see that Bobs got safely down. Everyone realised that there was actual peril in the feat he had undertaken so gaily, and each danger point passed in the downward climb brought forth a noisier cheering. Once he missed his footing and slipped, the length of his body, down the steep roof. The crowd held its breath, but he stopped himself somehow, and struggled back to safety, amid a tremendous yelling. At last, leaping down to the lowest roof, he caught a branch of the tree, went hand over hand into the boughs, and slid down the trunk to the ground, where he found himself looking straight into the rosy face

Tia

of a girl with golden hair, who was clapping her hands and shouting "Hurrah!" with the best of them.

Bobs had never seen her until that minute, but, involuntarily, his hand went to his capless head. "Thanks, I'm sure!" he said, with a merry twinkle. Then his admirers closed around him and carried him off to the lunch-room.

"What was that he said to you, Jack?" asked a resentful voice over her shoulder.

"Oh, Quis, are you there? He said 'Thanks,' that was all. I don't know him, you see. Wasn't it great?"

"Great foolishness, yes! Don't you know you mustn't let fellows speak to you until they've been introduced?" Marquis answered, in an undertone, and Jacquette, turning away with the girls, felt, suddenly, that the time might come when she should outgrow her cousin's leading-strings.

The week slipped away, after that, and

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

Saturday came. The Sigma Pi initiation, fixed for that day, was to take place at Nell Brewster's, but early in the forenoon, two girls came down the street, leading a third, who was blindfolded, and deposited her in the laundry at Jacquette's home, without a word to anyone. Jacquette had already gone over to Nell's and presumably had offered the use of her house to the sorority, for, a little later, Miss Granville found another strange girl in the pantry, taking a double handful of cookies out of the jar, and, still later, two more walked into the front door, without greeting of any sort, seated themselves in the living-room, and staid there, silent, for an hour.

Aunt Sula had some difficulty in explaining these "initiation stunts" to her courtly old father, especially after he had tried in vain to make polite conversation with the two girls who had been rendered deaf and dumb by their vow of silence.

Tia

“Nothing excuses such rudeness, daughter,” he remonstrated, shaking his silvery head. “I don’t like this sorosis Jacquette is in.”

“Sorority, father,” Miss Granville prompted, with a smile.

“Call it what you will; it’s just as bad,” he persisted. “Those girls are too young to run such a society. They’ve proved it, to-day.”

At ten o’clock that evening, a telephone inquiry brought back from Jacquette the word that the initiation was over, but refreshments were not, and that a crowd of Beta Sigs, Quis among the number, had discovered what was going on, and had broken into Nell’s house, and insisted on being served with some of the goodies. “Oh, we’re having such fun, Tia!” Jacquette concluded. “Don’t sit up for me, you and grandpa. Quis will bring me home, and I’ll come as soon as I possibly can.”

Old Mr. Granville went to rest, then,

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

shaking his head over the change since the good old days in the country when his daughters were young, but Aunt Sula sat in her room and waited. It was after midnight when she finally heard the careful click of the front door latch and the creak of the stairs as a much-subdued girl crept up.

The feasting at Nell's had lasted a little too long, and had been a little too noisy. Before the party had dispersed, Mr. Brewster, a blunt, outspoken man, had come down to the dining-room, where the boys were pelting each other with cake, and had given them a piece of his mind as to proper hours and fitting behaviour. Most of the girls had cried; the boys had gone home insulted and angry; but, all the time, deep in her heart, Jacquette had felt that Nell's father had just cause for his action, and now, as she laid off her wraps in her own room, she owned to herself that she was ashamed of the Sigma Pi initiation.

Tia

Not since Brookdale had she needed, as she did at that minute, to talk things over with Aunt Sula, and when she saw the light still burning at the end of the hall, she went to the door, and peeped in.

Sula Granville, in a pale blue wrapper, sat before the fire brushing out her long dark hair. She looked extremely girlish in the dim, flickering light, but Jacquette was not thinking of this as she paused in the doorway. Her heart was hungering for the sympathy which had always been hers, at need, from the only mother she had ever known, and she hesitated, now, because of a vague, unhappy feeling that something had come between them. It was a relief, then, when Aunt Sula, looking up, held out her hands without a word, and the next instant found Jacquette on her knees with both arms round the blue wrapper.

Little by little the story of the evening came out, and, when she had heard it all, Aunt Sula said, "Come down here, girlie,

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

with your head on my knee—the old Brookdale way.”

The tired girl slipped to the floor, and a grateful, mothered feeling came to her as she felt a gentle hand smoothing her hair for a minute, before Aunt Sula began:

“You told me once, Jacquette, that every girl who joined Sigma Pi was allowed to except her mother, or guardian, when she took her pledge of secrecy. Do you remember?”

“Y-yes,” came the doubtful answer. “The girls did say so before I joined, but I’ve found out since that they won’t excuse your doing it unless it’s absolutely necessary.”

“And the result is, as you said the other day, that no outsider can judge sororities quite fairly, because the best part is secret. Now, I want to judge Sigma Pi fairly. I want you to tell me all the good and beautiful things about it.”

There was a pause, while Jacquette

Tia

thought this over. Then she offered, tentatively:

“Surely you’ve noticed, Tia, how much more careful I am of my personal appearance? That’s sorority influence.”

“Good, too, unless it leads you to spend more money than you can afford on your wardrobe and to look down on the non-sorority girls who can’t dress so well,” Aunt Sula agreed. “It has occurred to me, though, that when this elaborate attention to dress crowds out time for the care of one’s own bedroom, the sorority hasn’t taught quite daintiness enough.”

Jacquette looked guilty, but she went on, sturdily, “A sorority encourages a spirit of sisterhood, Tia. We have to take vows to love each other always, and help each other, and accept criticism from each other without getting angry.”

“Sisterhood.” The echo was gentle. “What do you think, yourself, Jacquette, of a sisterhood with twenty girls which

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

makes you unsisterly to all girls outside that clique? ”

“ Well, at least, it trains us to be loyal friends.”

“ Perhaps; but if loyalty to Sigma Pi makes you disloyal to duty at home or in school, isn't there something wrong with it? ”

Into Jacquette's thoughts flashed the memory that two of her Sigma Pi sisters had deliberately missed their afternoon recitations, the week before, because they considered it necessary to take a girl they were “ rushing ” to the matinee. “ But, Tia,” she hurried on, defensively, “ you forget its effect on scholarship. We're ashamed to fall below passing mark, because our pin will be taken off if we do.”

Aunt Sula looked thoughtful. “ I wonder if a sorority can help scholarship while it uses up so many study hours? ”

“ Oh, it does! And then, it's good social training for us, too.”

Tia

“Does it teach you to give the Sigma Pi whistle to a girl a block away, when I’m walking and talking with you on the street?” Aunt Sula put in, quizzically.

“No; but that whistle is the accepted way of hailing each other. All the girls do it; haven’t you noticed? Here’s another good point, though—a sorority interests nice girls in each other instead of their having their heads full of boys. And then—well, isn’t that enough?”

“Not quite. Don’t you think that, as long as your pledges are forced to do things which make them a nuisance to outsiders, you’re giving outsiders reason to think you girls are too young and foolish to have charge of a secret society?”

“You mean our making that girl steal cookies!” Jacquette dimpled, in spite of herself, at the recollection.

“Yes; everything of that sort. And one more thing; I want to know, positively that there is nothing in the Sigma Pi in-

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

itiation that could offend the delicacy of any sensitive, modest girl."

Jacquette recalled a certain rite at which one of the pledges had balked in the initiation the day before, and flushed uncomfortably. Just then the bronze clock on the mantel struck one with a silvery note. Aunt Sula looked up, as if answering.

"That's so," she said; "it's too late. An initiation that takes all day ought not to run into the night like this. Jacquette," she concluded, "I'll make this bargain with you. I'll be a friend to Sigma Pi, and never criticise it except as I may suggest something when we are all alone, if you'll try your best to change these points I've spoken of."

"Oh, Tia!" Jacquette protested, lifting her head. "You forget that I'm one insignificant little freshman. The girls wouldn't listen to me."

"One insignificant little freshman with

Tia

the courage of her convictions can do something. I only ask you to try your best."

The golden head dropped again, and the little clock ticked away minute after minute while the soft light of the fire wavered over two still figures. At last the tall girl stood up. "I'm going to try," she said, very gravely. "Give me your hand, Tia. Put your fingers this way. No, this way. There. It would be wrong for me to tell this to anyone else in the world outside of my sorority—and the girls might not understand how it's right for me to tell even you—but that's the Sigma Pi grip on our bargain! Good-night, darling."

CHAPTER IV

BOBS

IT was the noon half-hour at Marston High, and boys and girls were crowding into the little bakery familiarly known among them as the "eat-house."

Louise Markham and Jacquette had been lucky enough to get a seat at one of the three oilcloth-covered tables, but by far the larger number, with their sandwiches in their hands, were good-naturedly jostling for standing-room.

Jacquette had decided that day, after a few weeks of single-handed effort, to take Louise into her confidence about the bargain with Aunt Sula, and Louise's hearty response had been an immense relief.

Bobs

“Your aunt’s exactly right!” she had declared. “She’s gone straight to the weak points of Sigma Pi. Talk about a sorority helping scholarship! The only thing that has saved my scholarship at Marston is the fact that my mother wouldn’t let me go Sigma Pi until I was a junior, and, even since then, it has been hard work to keep sorority business from interfering with my school work. I believe any girl that gets deep in sorority doings the first year of high school will have trouble straightening things out and doing well with her studies the rest of the time, and I want you to tell your Aunt Sula, Jacquette, that I’ll stand by and work for every reform she asked for. I can propose things, being a senior, that the girls wouldn’t take from you, and I believe we can accomplish something.”

“Oh, Louise, you’re such a splendid——” Jacquette began, but Louise nudged her to be quiet. Two boys had

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

slipped into places which had been vacated on the opposite side of the table, and, as Jacquette looked up, she found herself gazing into the blue eyes of Bobs Drake.

Bobs had scarcely seated himself and ordered a glass of milk from the distracted young waitress, who was answering wild calls for "redhots!" and "soup!" from all directions at once, before the boys and girls began to swarm about him.

"I hear you've gone into training, now, Bobs, just like a 'varsity man," began one of the boys. "They're telling around that you live on birdseed and mush, and take long runs in the early morning. Is that right?"

"He wouldn't come over to the frat house, last night, anyway," put in Lawrence Beach. "I understand he's started going to bed at six, now."

"Then we'll have to go around and serenade him," proposed Rex Morton. "We'll give him, 'Oh, does it not seem

Bobs

hard to you? ’ ’ ” He hummed the first line, and the crowd of boys and girls took it up:

“ Oh, does it not seem hard to you,
When all the sky is clear and blue,
And I should like so much to play—
I have to go to bed by day? ”

they sang plaintively, while Bobs sat sipping his glass of milk with a good-humoured smile on his sunburned face.

As the joking went on, Jacquette knew, whether she looked at Bobs or not, that his eyes were almost constantly on her. She wondered why. It flattered and embarrassed her at the same time, and she was glad and sorry when Louise proposed to go. A moment later, in brushing past him on her way out, she was astonished to have him slip a folded note into her hand.

“ Louise, he’s written something to me! ” she exclaimed, as soon as they reached the street. “ Let’s see what it says. ”

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

She unfolded the paper and together the two girls read:

“Will you let me walk home with you after school?”

“Bobs.”

“Do I know him well enough? Say yes, Louise!” Jacquette demanded. “Blanche Gross introduced him to me the day after that Indian performance and I’ve talked with him in the halls some, since then, but I never dreamed of his giving me a second thought, when he’s so popular, and I’m just a freshman. Blanche says he has the dandiest morals of any boy she knows. What do you think, Louise?”

“Oh, he’s nice. I’ve known him all my life and his mother is one of our best friends, but he’s not a Beta Sig, and Quis isn’t going to like it if you choose friends outside of his frat.”

“H’m! Quis doesn’t own me. Besides,

Bobs

I have to treat all fraternities alike, according to the bargain with Aunt Sula," Jacquette declared, virtuously, and immediately began to compose her reply to Bobs.

That reply consumed a large part of the study-hour following. The momentous questions involved were: first, how to begin; second, what to say; third, how to end.

If Bobs were any other boy, it would be right to call him "Mr.," but no one in the school said "Mr. Drake." Everyone said "Bobs." His real name was Robin Sidney Drake, but that was absurd for Bobs! Besides, he had signed himself "Bobs."

Meantime a procession of Aunt Sula's admonitions in regard to writing notes to boys haunted Jacquette like ghosts, and made her tear up effort after effort. When the last was finally completed it read as follows:

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

“Bobs:

“Yes.

“Jacquette Willard.”

She laid this circumspect epistle on Bob's desk as she passed out of the study-room to her English class, and two minutes later Blanche Gross, acting the part of a Sigma Pi guardian, came hurrying after, and sitting down beside her, said reprovingly:

“You shouldn't write notes to Bobs Drake, Jacquette. The minute you were out of the room he showed it to Rex Morton, and they both laughed.”

“Let them!” Jacquette returned, flushing. “There was nothing in it that the whole world mightn't see. That's the only kind of note I ever write to boys, and I didn't learn the habit from Sigma Pi Epsilon, either!”

Then, having heaped her secret vexation with Bobs and Rex on the head of

Bobs

Blanche, who was the most prolific writer of notes in the whole sorority, Jacquette proceeded to give conspicuous attention to her English teacher.

It was an eventful moment when she walked down the street from Marston with the broad-shouldered captain of the football team at her side, and Jacquette hugely enjoyed the sensation she knew she was causing among the girls. Then they turned the corner, and, without giving her time to puzzle longer, Bobs began abruptly:

“I suppose you’re wondering what I want, and I’ll tell you, to begin, that I never would have written you that note if I hadn’t believed that you’re absolutely square.”

If Jacquette had heard herself called a princess among women she could not have felt more pleased—and her face showed it.

“Of course you know,” Bobs continued, “that our team has won every game it

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has played against any other school this fall? ”

“ I think I do ! ” she flashed, saucily.

“ And you know that the next game is the last of the season—the one that decides the championship for the year.” Bobs cleared his throat, and Jacquette waited.

“ Well, of course you know that, according to the rules at Marston, if a football man’s average for the week falls below on the day before the game, he’s debarred from playing. You knew that, didn’t you? ”

“ Yes.”

She wondered what was coming.

“ The point is this: I’ve had a hard pull to keep above in my studies and keep the team in shape, too, and I haven’t always done it, either. You probably know that I missed playing in two games this season, because I was below, those two weeks. But, such marks as I have had, I’ve earned myself. I haven’t had credit

Bobs

for a stroke of work that was done by anyone else."

"Of course not!"

He looked at her curiously. "It's a common thing, you know, for the fellows on the team to have someone else do their studying during the season," he explained, defensively. "But I've stood against it, and they all know it. That's the reason I'm in such an awkward box, now. The fact is, I'm below in my English this week, and, besides all the rest of the work, there are two themes lacking, and, to make it as bad as it could be, one of those themes is a sonnet!"

"But Bobs, a sonnet—that's easy!"

"That's what I've heard about you," he answered, hurriedly. "They say you can write poetry as easy as breathing. Now, you wouldn't believe it could be done, but I've managed, all through my high school course, to steer clear of sonnets. I believe it's a put-up job, anyway, requiring so

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much extra work this week. I have English with Miss Breckinridge, you know, and she's down on football. She thinks she can keep me out of the game by piling on a sonnet, after everything else. Well, she's cute! I give up. I can't write a sonnet."

"Oh, Bobs!" Jacquette stared at him in blank dismay. "You're captain! You must play in the championship game!"

"Then will you write the sonnet?"

Jacquette stood still and met his honest blue eyes. No one who knew Bobs could help trusting him. As far as she could see, he was not ashamed of having asked the question.

She knew that it was a common thing among the girls to prepare lessons for their boy friends on the team, but, somehow, it had never entered her mind that she could do such a thing. Suddenly the thought that she—Jacquette Willard—might gain or lose Bobs Drake the chance

Bobs

to play in the championship game, took away her breath.

“But it wouldn’t be your work, Bobs,” she uttered, mechanically, while the sweet flattery of the situation tugged at her principles.

“What do I care?” he protested. “I’m not going to write sonnets for a living. I’m going to be an engineer. Oh, I know how you feel about it, because my principles are just the same, but this case is an exception. We wouldn’t be setting a bad example, even, because no one except you and me need ever know. That’s one reason I asked you; I knew you’d never tell.”

They had reached Jacquette’s home while he was speaking, and as she glanced at an upper window, Aunt Sula’s face leaned forward to smile a welcome.

“Oh, Bobs!” Jacquette cried, reproachfully, then, “you *said* you thought I was square!”

“I do!” he answered, stoutly, and after

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that they argued for a full half hour, standing there at the foot of the steps in the chill November day.

The end of it was that Bobs went away with several new ideas about the conscience of a girl. Not only that; he had promised to burn the midnight oil, before he slept, over a sonnet which was to be addressed to past football heroes of Marston High, whose ghosts, Jacquette had hinted, might be imagined as haunting the assembly-room where their gloriously-won banners still hung, and where the big mass-meetings were always held.

It would have been far easier for Jacquette to compose that sonnet on the spot, than it had been to keep from doing it, and, as she entered the house she was feeling triumphant over the way she had insisted on Bobs's working out his own scheme. Then, before she had laid down her books, the bell sounded, and, turning, she saw her cousin Marquis on the threshold.

"Come out and walk around the block with me, Jack," he demanded. "I want to see you alone."

"All right, Quis," she answered, happily, stopping to give her white-haired grandfather a hug as he came out of the library to meet her. "Just sit down a minute, please, while I run upstairs to speak to Tia. Then I'll be *à votre service*."

But, instead of accepting her suggestion, Marquis excused himself to his grandfather and went out on the steps, where Jacquette found him a little later, with Clarence Mullen. Marquis had just loaded his own school-books on top of those Clarence already carried, and was giving a list of orders in a tone that a master might use with a slave. "After that," he was finishing, as Jacquette appeared, "take these books to my house and wait there till I come, no matter how late it is."

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Jacquette glanced at Clarence with quick understanding. Far from seeming humiliated, he had an air of new importance as he touched his hat to her and hurried away.

“So he’s pledged Beta Sig, is he?” she asked, with a smile.

Marquis nodded without speaking, as they went down the steps together.

“I’ve a small grudge against that boy, because you deserted Louise and me to walk to school with him one morning,” Jacquette went on, lightly. “He’s been a rival of mine since then. Every time I want to speak to you, he’s right at your heels. I think you have some sort of fascination for him, Quis, the way he follows you around.”

“But of course the fact that he has a special admiration for your cousin doesn’t win him any favour in your eyes,” Quis said, stiffly.

“Of course it does! In fact that’s the

Bobs

only reason I haven't let myself take a prejudice against him. Why, Quis!"—turning a surprised face to him—"what's the matter?"

But Marquis met her questioning look coldly. "I suppose you haven't forgotten that Bobs Drake is an Epsilon Lambda Kappa," he answered.

There was something irresistibly funny to Jacquette in his solemn way of pronouncing those three Greek letters, especially as the members of Bobs's fraternity were universally known around school as the "Elks." In spite of herself, she smiled mischievously as she answered, "No; I haven't forgotten."

"Perhaps that doesn't mean anything to you," Marquis went on, severely, noting the smile. "I've heard, before, that girls had no sense of honour, so probably the fact that the Elks are recognised as good friends of Kappa Delta, always working to land the best girls in that sorority,

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wouldn't make any difference to you—a Sigma Pi. Of course, my frat makes it a point to help Sigma Pi, and, naturally, it expects a little appreciation in return, but that's not my point, now. How do you suppose it made me feel to have the other fellows in the frat house, just now, see you, my own cousin, walk past with a fellow that has treated me the way Bobs Drake has? ”

“ Quis, what on earth do you mean? ”

“ I mean that when he was elected captain he put Ned Woodward on the team instead of me, just because I'm a Beta Sig and Ned's an Elk. Yes, he did! Fraternity prejudice isn't supposed to rule in the make-up of a football team, but it got in its work that time. Ned's no better man than I am, and most of the fellows will tell you he isn't as good. Then Bobs made me his sub. That means I have no chance to play, ever, unless he falls below in his marks or gets hurt in the game.

Bobs

Haven't you caught on to the fact that the reason I could play in those two games, early in the season, was because Bobs Drake wasn't above, those weeks? Do you know that a fellow has to play at least two games and a half, in order to win his football emblem? Unless I play another half-game with the team—and there's precious little hope of it, now—I won't have a right to wear the letters of my school on my sweater, this year."

"But Quis——"

"I tell you, Bobs Drake doesn't intend I shall have that right. He thinks I need taking down because I've lived abroad, or some such rot. But he's hurting himself, all right! Talk about his being the idol of the school! You wouldn't think so if you could hear the fellows talk, down at the Beta Sig house. They won't get over his slight to me in a hurry, and, for my part, I never shall. You can choose between Bobs Drake and me, right here and

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now, Jacquette. You know the facts. Are you going to have anything more to do with him? ”

Jacquette hesitated an instant, but that instant was too much for Marquis's hurt pride. He said something that stung, and she answered back as sharply as she could. They went around the block, not once, but five times, before Jacquette finally rushed into the house and up to Aunt Sula's room, where she flung herself on the couch in a tempest of tears.

“Oh, Tia, Tia! Quis is dreadfully angry at me!” she sobbed out. “He has said such awful things! He has even accused me of coaching Bobs Drake to keep him above this week, so that he can play in the championship game and keep Quis out!”

CHAPTER V

THE GAME

THIS is to certify that Robin Sidney Drake is above in all his studies at Marston High School, and qualified to enter the football game on Saturday, November 16, 1907."

Those were the words on the paper which Bobs fluttered in Jacquette's face when he met her in the hall between bells, on Friday afternoon. The document was signed by all his teachers, and, at the foot, appeared the principal's name, preceded by the mystic letters, "O. K."

"Hurrah!" she cried, her face pink with gladness, in spite of an uncomfortable thought of Marquis. "You did it yourself, that's the best of it! Now, you

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may decide to write sonnets for a living, after all."

"Not much!" he denied, so fervently that Jacquette laughed.

"How perfectly funny it looks to see your name written, 'Robin Sidney Drake'!" she went on, still admiring the paper.

"Why? Isn't it a nice name?" he asked, anxiously. Bobs had always cherished a haunting doubt about the propriety of naming a boy after a bird.

"Oh, yes, beautiful — only nothing seems quite right for you but Bobs."

"All right, say it then. By the way, 'Miss Willard' seems perfectly funny to me."

"Why? Isn't it a nice name?" she mocked.

"Oh, yes, beautiful—only not quite right for you."

"What is right for me?"

Bobs hesitated, but he knew what he

The Game

wanted. "Quis calls you, 'Jack,'" it came out at last.

"All right, say it, then!"

They were still laughing over this little skirmish when Mademoiselle passed them on the way to one of her French classes.

"Coming to the game, to-morrow, Mademoiselle?" Bobs asked her.

"No, lambkin, I shall not come," she answered, sweetly. "I dearly love the little boys who play football, but I would so much rather go to see them in the hospital, afterward!"

Bobs laughed, and before he could speak, Mademoiselle hurried along, adding over her shoulder:

"Honey, I know just one thing about the little children who play football. Sometimes—once in a long while—they pass my examinations!"

The big fellow sent a smile of genuine liking after her. "Can't get ahead of Mademoiselle," he said, but, to his sur-

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

prise, as he turned back to Jacquette, she met him with a serious, almost rebuking gaze.

“Bobs,” she said, “Quis thinks there’s no excuse for a football man’s having the reputation Mademoiselle gave you just now. He says a fellow can play football and keep up his studies, too, if he tries hard enough. He does it. He stands well in everything, and you know he’s a good football player.”

“Oh, yes,” Bobs assented, carelessly. “Quis never has to work on his lessons, though. He just looks at ’em. Most of us have to peg.”

“Bobs,” said Jacquette, with a sudden little tremble in her voice, “can’t you—couldn’t you, possibly—Bobs, won’t you please manage, somehow, to put Quis on for the game, to-morrow?”

Bobs’ face was blank with astonishment. “What can I do?” he exclaimed. “He’s my sub, you know. You wouldn’t have me

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deliberately get smashed to give him a chance? ”

“Of course not! But Quis is as good as any of the team. You know that. Why couldn't you put him on instead of one of the others? The rest have all played enough to win their emblems, haven't they? ”

“Yes, but see here! I can't pick a fellow off the team and put another in his place, as if they were so many ninepins. They have feelings—and rights, too. A girl can't understand!”

“I understand this much,” she insisted, her eyes filling with tears, “you're the captain, and the boys think whatever you do is right, anyway, and you could manage it, somehow! I stood up for you to Quis, Bobs, but if you really did keep him off the team just because he was a Beta Sig, and now won't even let him win his emblem, I can't help thinking you haven't been square!”

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"It wasn't all because he was a Beta Sig," Bobs protested, warmly. "But, other things being equal, any fellow'd give the preference to his own fraternity. Quis would, himself. Why, the Beta Sigs ran the team like tyrants, last year, and this time we thought the Elks might have a turn. 'Tisn't right, though. I've been sorry, ever since, that I didn't put Quis on, but I can't help it, now. It's too late."

Jacquette listened unmoved. "You could do it if you wanted to. I know you could," was all she said, as she hurried off to her class.

They had been standing by the door of an apparently empty recitation room, but, as they turned away, the small, dark face of Clarence Mullen peered at them curiously from the doorway. He had been putting some work on the blackboard, just inside the room, and had heard every word.

Long before two o'clock, the next after-

The Game

noon, twenty Sigma Pi girls, in gala attire, were seated in the front row of the grand stand, waiting for the championship game to begin. Just behind them sat their rivals, the Kappa Deltas, while less important sororities—each a clan by itself—were scattered through the crowd as near to the front as they could find places. It was Marston against the Daniel Webster High School, and the contest would be the closest of the season.

Gradually the seats filled until the stand where the Marston pupils sat, and the other on the opposite side of the field, which was reserved for students from Webster High, were both packed.

At last a gate at the end of the field swung open, and the Webster team came trotting out. Like one body, every person on the Webster grand stand was on his feet, and black and red banners fluttered out from end to end of that mass of people, while boys and girls together yelled:

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“Webster! High!

Hi! Yi.

Sky! High!

Webster!”

Flutter—flutter—flutter—said the black and red, and the roaring from the Webster side waxed louder and louder, as the Daniel Webster team began its signal practice on the field, but all this time the Marston stand remained a model of dignified silence.

A little longer. Then watches began to be pulled out. What was the matter? It was past time for the game to begin. Where were the Marstons?

At last, just as everyone was asking this question, the other gate opened—another team was in the field! Presto! The Marston grand stand was on its feet. Blue and white!—blue and white!—blue and white!—rippling, waving, flapping in the November sunshine, while the new cry that rent the air was:

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“Osky! Wow! Wow!
Skinny! Wow! Wow!
Marston! Wow!”

“Skin Marston!
Wow! Wow! Wow!”

came back from the Websters in a deafening screech, and of all the voices on both sides, no two were used more vigorously than those of Jacquette and Louise, who stood in the front row of the Marston stand, and “osky-wow-wowed” with all their girlish might for the glory of their school.

“I don’t see Bobs anywhere,” Jacquette whispered, as she rested her lungs for a minute. “I can usually pick him out first, because he doesn’t wear any head guard, and by his white sweater, too. Does he wear a different colour from the rest because he’s captain? It’s lots more effective than the blue ones the other boys have.”

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"I know," Louise assented, with her eyes on the field. "The blue 'M. H.' is pretty on the white, isn't it? Sh!—look!"

The whistle had blown and the teams were lining up for the game. People had settled down into their seats, and were watching eagerly. "There's Reddy!" "Go it, Reddy!" "That's Shorty!" "Look at Ned!" "Come on, Chub!" were the explosive cries that had taken the place of continuous yelling as the game began. Then—attention!

Jacquette clutched Louise's hand. "Bobs isn't there! Who's quarter-back? It's Quis!"

Quis it was, running the team in Bobs's place. What did it mean? Where was Bobs? But the game had started.

Forward—and back! Forward—and back! Forward—and back!—struggled the two teams, now on Marston territory, now almost to the Daniel Webster goal. Two more evenly matched schools it would

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have been hard to find. Each had behind it that season an unbroken series of triumphs; to both of them this game meant more than the mere winning of the championship banner—it meant the overcoming of a hated rival.

Where was Bobs Drake? That question was the undercurrent of all the perfunctory cheering on the Marston stand, and with Jacquette, it swept away every other thought.

“It’s my fault!” she kept repeating in a horrified tone, to Louise. “It’s all my fault! Look! We’re losing ground! We are! Louise, I made him let Quis play. If Marston’s beaten, it’s all my fault!”

“Nonsense!” Louise insisted. “Do you think Bobs Drake would desert the team because a girl told him to? There’s some other reason. But look! Oh——”

No one ever knew just what happened. Two minutes of play were left. There was a weak spot somewhere in the Marston

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line; a trick play; a wildly struggling mass. Then a red-clad form, the Webster quarter-back, pursued in vain by the best men on the Marston team, shot across the field, and fell exhausted, with the ball in his arms, just over the Marston line!

An attempt to kick goal failed; time was called; the first half was done; the score stood five to nothing in favor of Webster High!

The Webster yelling was terrific, as the tangle of human beings began to resolve itself into individuals, and clear the field, but among the Marstons arose a great buzz of anxious questioning. Where was Bobs? What had become of their captain?

Louise was trying to keep Jacquette in her place until they could get some news. "But I can't sit here and wait!" Jacquette refused, excitedly. "I must find somebody and do something!"

"Well, I'm going with you, then,"

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Louise gave up at last. "Keep our places, girls," she called to the rest of the Sigma Pi crowd, as she followed Jacqueline.

"Now, what can you do?" she demanded, as she overtook her. "A girl can't go to training quarters."

"I don't know! Can't I send a message to Bobs, some way?"

"There goes Bud Banister! He's manager of the team," cried Louise. "Bud! Bud! Tell us what's the matter!"

"Matter enough!" the tall, lanky fellow flung back angrily, as he ran past. "Bobs went off down-town on the two o'clock train and sent us word to go on with the game without him!"

"I told you, Louise!" Jacqueline gasped. "Bud, wait!" she called.

"Miss Willard! Look here!" put in a breathless voice at Jacqueline's elbow, and, turning, she saw Clarence Mullen, his small, dark face the sickly colour of fear.

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“What shall I do?” he demanded, as if consulting a confidante. “I told ’em he went down-town, but it wasn’t so. I’ve got him locked in the gymnasium, over at school, but I can’t let him out for the next half, even if I want to, because the janitor came out of the building when I did, and he locked the outside door, and I haven’t got a key to that!”

Jacquette whirled around, and towered above the boy’s shrinking figure. “What are you saying?” she cried out, seizing him by both shoulders in her excitement. “You locked Bobs in the gymnasium?”

“Yes!” He faltered under her wrathful glance. “I—I heard you talking to him yesterday, and I—I knew the Beta Sigs all thought it was dirty work that Granville couldn’t win his emblem, and—I had the chance! He was late, and he ran down to the gym alone to change his clothes, and left the key in the outside of the door, and while he was at his locker, I

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shut it and turned the key, and then the janitor came away when I did, so there was no one to hear him and I told—— ”

“ I believe it’s true! ” Louise broke in. “ There goes Mr. Branch, now, with Bud Banister! We must tell them—quick! ”

The grey-haired principal of Marston turned in surprise, as the girls, followed by Clarence, dashed up behind him, but, before their jumble of explanation was done, he started for the school, racing like a boy with Bud Banister. Mr. Branch had a key to the building, and, as they came near, they heard shouting and pounding, and saw Bobs’s flushed face looking out through the iron-barred basement windows of the gymnasium.

“ Everybody in the block has gone to the game,” Bud panted, “ or someone would have heard him, sure! ”

It was the work of one excited moment to set Bobs free, and no time was wasted in words. The case of Clarence Mullen

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could wait; the game would not. All Bobs asked was how the score stood, and whether the second half had begun, and even this information he took on the run. Not one of them could keep up with him on the way back to the field. Bud Banister was at his heels; Jacquette and Louise trailed after, and, last of all, came Mr. Branch, with a stern hand on the shoulder of Clarence Mullen, questioning him sharply, as they hurried along.

The Sigma Pi girls on the grand stand received Louise and Jacquette in a flutter of curiosity, for only stray rumours of Bobs's desertion had been passed along to them, but, before there was time for explanation, the whistle blew, and all eyes turned to the field.

Then a shout went up—bigger and wilder than any shout that had gone before. Bobs Drake was there! Marston was safe!

As the teams faced each other, just be-

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fore he took his place as quarterback, Bobs had passed along the line, murmuring a personal word of encouragement to each of the boys. Up to that instant, they had been parts of a well-oiled machine; now they crouched there, every man of them ready to play that game with his head, his heart, and his whole soul.

On the grand stand where the Sigma Pi girls were sitting, a quick glance of intelligence ran along. "Webster never would have made that touchdown if Bobs had been here!" was whispered from one to the other.

"That's not fair!" Louise murmured to Jacquette. "I'm not saying anything against Bobs, but my brother says there isn't a better quarterback on a high school team anywhere than Quis."

Meanwhile, down in the field, the struggle of the first half was being repeated. Marston was reinforced by Bobs's presence, but Webster played with the confi-

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dence born of success, and, again, each fought an obstinate foe.

If systematic cheering could have won the game, Marston would have had it. Over and over, the grand stand rose to its feet and shouted as one man such heartening yells as,

“Harum! Scarum! Wah Whoo!
Hear us! Cheer us! White and blue!
We play football! That’s no joke!
Marston High School! Hic! Haec!
Hoc!”

Down below, Captain Bobs Drake, dimly conscious of the support the school was giving him, seemed, by sheer force of will, to be driving his team toward the far white goal line which meant victory. The score still remained as at the end of the first half. As the close of the game approached, he realised, almost with desperation, that no combined effort on the part

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of the team could break down the defence which confronted it. He, Bobs Drake, must win that game.

“Seven rahs for the team!” roared the man who was directing the cheering from the Marston stand, and, “Rah! Rah! Rah! Rah! Rah! Rah! Bobs!” was exploded on the air.

But Bobs heard none of it. At that moment, a fumble on the part of one of his men, had placed the ball at his feet, and like a flash, with the pig-skin in his arms, he had broken loose, hurdled a crouching player, flung two more out of his path—and gained the line.

Five to five—said the score! Marston’s one chance of winning depended, now, on Bobs’s ability to gain an extra point by kicking the ball over the cross-bar between the goal-posts. There was a moment of breathless suspense. Then the ball sailed proudly over the bar—time was called—and the Marston crowd went wild!

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The game was won. The Marston stand emptied itself like an avalanche into the narrow space between it and the fenced-in field. The wonder was that everyone got down alive, for the leaping and scrambling and pushing were terrific. Everyone wanted to be first at the gate where the team was coming out on its way back to training-quarters.

From their seat in the front row, the Sigma Pi girls had best chance, and Jacquette and Louise stood close to the entrance as the triumphal procession appeared.

First came Bobs, proudly borne aloft by four of his team. There was mud on his forehead, mud on one cheek, and a long scratch on the other—but he was a hero, every inch, in the hearts of his comrades, and the ovation they gave him proved it.

Close behind him rode Quis Granville, and after him the rest of the eleven, each

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lifted on the shoulders of three or four fellows.

When they had all tramped by, the crowd of schoolboys that always straggles after the team fell into line behind them, and the Sigma Pi girls began to chatter.

“What will they do to that wicked little Clarence Mullen?” Blanche Gross demanded. She had been gleaning the facts from Louise and passing them on. “He’ll surely be expelled!”

“I don’t know! But I could forgive him, after that victory!” put in Mamie Coolidge, who had been screaming, and jumping up and down until her new red velvet hat was flopping wildly over one ear. “Jacquette Willard, you tell your cousin for me that I never saw such a tackle as that in all my life!”

“Yes, but think of Bob’s kick!” Etta Brainerd put in, soulfully. “Didn’t he look happy when they carried him by? He saw us—don’t you think so?”

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“He looked straight at you, Jacquette,” Louise whispered.

“I know it,” she whispered back, “and I was so busy waving to him that I never even saw Quis until he was away past!”

CHAPTER VI

THE MASS-MEETING

THERE!" said Jacquette, holding up a huge yellow chrysanthemum that she had just finished. "Would anyone guess it was paper? That's my fiftieth, and I must go."

A committee of Sigma Pi girls had met, that afternoon, in the sorority rooms which were on the third floor of Blanche Gross's house, to work on the decorations for the annual dance.

"Aren't they going to look lovely, nodding around among yards and yards of blue ribbon!" Blanche exclaimed, twirling a duplicate of Jacquette's flower above her head. "Don't go, Jacquette," she added, as a white-capped maid appeared with a tray. "There are signs of hot chocolate

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on the horizon. Besides, we faithfuls may have to do more than fifty apiece unless the rest of the girls come to time. We must have a thousand chrysanthemums, you know, or it won't make any show, at all."

"Oh, well, I can't resist the chocolate," Jacquette yielded, sitting down again, "but I must skip, right after that. Truth is, there's been so much to do about the dance that I've scarcely looked at a lesson for a week, and I simply must get in a little studying before my algebra exam, to-morrow morning."

"What a nuisance to have exams the week of the dance!" Mamie Coolidge sympathised, as the chocolate was being handed around. "Oh, by the way, Jacquette, what about your carriage for the dance? I heard your aunt wouldn't let you have one."

"What! Going to a formal dance without a carriage?" cried Etta Brainerd, in

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a scandalised tone. "Jacquette—you poor girl!"

Jacquette flushed. "Pity's wasted, Etta," she answered, rather curtly. "I expect to have a carriage."

"But since when?" Mamie persisted. "Flo Burton told me you couldn't."

"If you want the whole story, it's this," said Jacquette. "At first, Aunt Sula didn't like my asking a boy to take me to the dance, but when she found it was the sorority way, she let me invite Bobs. Then, when she found that he was expected to pay for a carriage, she did suggest that I do without one. You see, she supposed, because we're young, the whole thing would be simple—early hours and all that. But when I told her how it really was, she said she was going to hire the carriage for me herself, and that I should invite Louise and Bud Banister to go in it with Bobs and me. So I did."

"And a lovely plan, I call it!" Louise

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chimed in. "You'd have laughed to see the look of relief on Bud's face when I told him! It isn't so easy for him to get money from his father, I guess. You know, girls, it is a sort of hold-up, the way we invite the boys and expect them to furnish carriages."

"Oh, I don't know," Mamie objected, while she dropped another lump of sugar in her chocolate. "They get a chance to come to a dance that costs us nearly three hundred dollars. My mother thought that was terribly extravagant until I told her how much worse some other sororities are. Did you know the Omikron Gammas had to put up twenty dollars apiece for their dance, besides the regular dues? I say it's pretty creditable to Sigma Pi, that we draw all our funds out of the bank and give our dance without any extra taxing, when we may be needing that money any time, to fight the Board of Education with!"



“There are signs of hot chocolate on the horizon!”



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Everybody, except Mamie, laughed. She was the spoiled child of Sigma Pi, and when she lifted her doll face to make a remark it was always the signal for indulgent smiles.

"I wouldn't say that outside, Mame," Blanche advised. "It might not sound well to the school authorities."

"It's true, just the same. Didn't Sigma Pi have to give a hundred dollars to the inter-fraternal league, last year, when we got the injunction to keep the Board from enforcing that rule against secret societies? And if the Board makes any more silly old rules, the boys say we'll have to get a good lawyer, and fight the thing to a finish."

"Just think,—what if they should ever succeed in shutting secret societies out of high school, altogether!" Louise suggested.

"They never can. We're too powerful for them," Blanche said, decidedly. "The

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only result would be that we'd have to work in the dark."

"Well, in the meantime, yours truly is going home to study," Jacquette put in, setting down her cup. "'Twas superfine chocolate, Blanche," she added, as she stepped gingerly over the billows of tissue paper that covered the floor.

"Wait for me, Jack," called Louise. "I've made sixty chrysanthemums; that's ten more than my share, and I'm needed at home, myself. Mother isn't well to-day."

"Pretty sorority spirit you girls show!" Etta grumbled, as she began crimping yellow petals again. "You might stay and help the rest of us, even if you did get yours done first."

No one echoed Etta, but there was a subdued manner about the farewells that seemed to give consent to her feeling, and, as the two girls walked down the street together, Jacquette said:

"Louise, sometimes it seems as if I

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couldn't do enough for Sigma Pi to suit the girls. They call me a traitor every time I speak of having to study, or to do anything at home, and, truly, I'm so rushed that I can't get time to mend my own stockings! There's sorority business on hand from morning till night."

"I know; all you can do is to hang on to your own judgment and not let the girls put too much on you. They count on the freshmen being flattered at the chance of doing most of the work, you know. There goes Quis around that corner, Jacquette. By the way, I was glad to see you were on speaking terms with him, this morning."

"Yes; we had to make it up after a fashion. But, oh, how angry he is with Clarence Mullen!"

"I don't wonder at that."

"No; I don't. He's afraid people may think he knew what Clarence was going to do; so he's making his disapproval as

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public as he can. Of course he won't let Clarence into Beta Sig, now, and he'd like to have him expelled from school, but Mr. Branch takes the ground that Clarence is less to blame than the big boys that talked all this feeling into him. If that's so, I'm partly responsible, too; he overheard me talking to Bobs about it, and that influenced him, you see."

"But that's no excuse for what he did!"

"No; Mr. Branch doesn't excuse him, but he says Clarence is so much younger, and so easily influenced that he's like one of these anarchists that get all inflamed by speeches they've heard and things they've read, and imagine they're doing a heroic act when they go and shoot the President. You ought to have heard him lecture the Beta Sig fellows in the talk he gave yesterday. He says Clarence actually expected they would applaud him, and that it reflects great discredit on them."

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“Well, there’s something in that, isn’t there? But, if I were Clarence I’d sooner be expelled than come back to Marston and face the feeling there is.”

“He’s not coming back. His father is going to send him to military school. Louise, did you know that Bobs went to Mr. Branch and told him that, as far as he was concerned, he hoped Clarence would get another chance?”

“No! What did Quis think of that?”

“Oh, Quis doesn’t like anything Bobs does! Here he’s won his emblem, but he says it’s no thanks to Bobs; that he never would have got it if Bobs hadn’t been locked up. I wish you’d talk to him. He’s so jealous of my liking any boy outside of his frat! This morning he accused me of getting the girls to give our dance on the same night the Beta Sigs have theirs, so that he’d be tied up for that evening and I could feel free to ask Bobs!”

“Foolishness!”

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“He doesn’t know it’s foolishness, though. Louise—” Jacquette lowered her voice as if she knew she were uttering heresy—“with Quis acting this way, and the Sigma Pi girls calling me disloyal every time I look at an old friend like Margaret Howland—I sometimes wish there were no such thing as a fraternity or sorority in school!”

Louise turned and looked at the tired, flushed face.

“That’s a mood, honey,” she answered, sagely. “I’ve had it, myself, but it comes back to this, every time. As long as there are sororities, we want to be in them. How would you like to go to a dance and be told that, because you were a non-sorority girl, you must stay in one end of the hall and not dance beyond a certain imaginary line on the floor?”

“They wouldn’t do it!”

“In some schools they do. Not here, because non-sorority girls aren’t invited.

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Do you know what would happen if you had asked a non-fraternity fellow to the dance? You'd dance with him and not another soul, all the evening. 'Tisn't fair, of course, but we can't reform the world all at once, so you'd better comfort yourself thinking how lovely you're going to look in that new gown. You'll be in sorority colours, won't you?—your hair the gold and your dress the blue."

Jacquette smiled through her mood at the thought. "I can hardly wait for Friday," she confessed, as they parted at the corner. "But Louise, you try to talk a little sense into Quis for me, won't you? Perhaps he'll listen to you; he thinks you're the whole thing."

"You mean he used to think so, before a certain Miss Willard came to town!" was the mischievous answer. "Yes, I'll do what I can. Good-night."

The week moved slowly along, and the Friday of the Sigma Pi dance had come.

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That morning, in every classroom at Marston, appeared the blackboard announcement that a mass-meeting would be held in the Assembly room, directly after school, for the presentation of football emblems to the team.

Marston Assembly Hall was shaped like a great low half-dome, and ceiled everywhere with varnished yellow pine. Seats lined the curved sides of the room, running down in steep tiers which left only a narrow floor space in front, and, from windows behind these seats, that afternoon, the sunlight streamed down into the faces of twelve self-conscious heroes who sat in a stiff row of chairs—their backs against the yellow wall—facing the audience.

Above their heads, plastered all over the one straight side of the room, hung the purple, red, blue, gold, and white banners which had been won by Marston in former victories, and on the piano, which stood wedged in between the front row of seats

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and the wall, rose a stack of suit-boxes, each containing, as everyone knew, a handsome dark blue sweater, with the white letters "M. H." emblazoned on its front.

Suddenly, the boys and girls, who were not only packed into seats but standing on every available inch in the room, began to cheer. Tippie McGee, the "Marston Mascot," a red-headed little gamin from nobody knew where, who was always on hand for the Marston games, had been perched on a chair by the piano, and Bud Banister, as manager of the team, was announcing,

"An original song, composed for the occasion by our mascot, Tippie, without whom we probably never could have beaten Webster. The school will please join in the second singing."

All along the low step in front of the first tier of seats—only a few feet from the football heroes, whom they faced—sat the smiling Sigma Pi girls, and it was into

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their eyes that Tippie looked as he began singing shrilly, to the tune of "The Good Old Summer-time":

"In the good old football time!
In the good old football time!
Strolling down by Marston field,
You'll see us buck the line!
Our captain kicks a goal from field,
And that's a very good sign
That Marston's got the championship
In the good old football time!"

That was all, but Patti in her palmiest days might have envied Tippie the warmth of his reception. Shrieks, whistles, applause with hands and feet, cries of "Good! Good for Tippie!" choked the air, and it was long before the crowd could calm itself to join uproariously in the second singing.

Once started, though, it could not stop. The second singing was followed by a third

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—the third by a fourth! Then—the presentation.

“Captain Robin Sidney Drake,” was the first name called. Bobs, arrayed in his best black suit, stepped forward amid a tremendous burst of cheering, and listened uncomfortably to Mr. Branch’s eulogy on his captainship of the Marston eleven. But when the box containing the precious sweater was handed to him, his face beamed. Claspings it tenderly, as one holds a baby, he stood smiling down at it for a minute before he lifted his blue eyes to the principal’s face. Then his lips parted, and everyone leaned forward to listen.

“It’s a—pretty big box!” said Bobs, and no eloquence could have pleased his adoring schoolmates better. They screamed with mirth, they laughed until they cried, they hooted with glee, they hurrahed for Bobs. Not until he swung around and faced them with a determined air of get-

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ting ready for a speech, did they subside. Then Bobs, still hugging the big box, threw back his head and addressed the galleries which did not exist.

“Thank you!” he said. Just that, not another word, but his eyes deserted the imaginary galleries, and, with his own merry smile, he looked straight into the faces of the boys and girls who loved him. After that, he sat down. Cheer? Of course they cheered! What if he couldn’t make a speech? He was—Bobs.

At last Bud’s voice was heard announcing “the popular song entitled, ‘Old M. H.’” Then Tippie, standing on the chair by the old piano, which was tinkling out the tune of “Tammany,” led off,

“Hold Hem Haitch!
Hold Hem Haitch!
Beat our captain if you can!
We’ll defend him to a man!
Hold Hem Haitch!” etc.

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The more enthusiastic Tippie grew, the more he aspirated his vowels, always, and to-day the school, seeking an outlet for pent-up feelings, seized on his.

“Hold Hem Haitch!
Hold Hem Haitch!”

they all shouted together, and not one more fervently than Jacquette, who, from the row of Sigma Pi girls, smiled straight into Bobs's face, as she sang

“Beat our captain if you can!
We'll defend him to a man!”

Then, suddenly, she felt Quis looking coldly at her, and, in spite of all she could do, her voice weakened and her eyes fell. A cloud had come over her gladness.

The meeting went on. One after another, the members of the team stood up, received their sweaters, acknowledged them

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properly, were duly cheered, and sat down. Marquis was last, the only substitute to win an "M. H." that year, and his little speech of appreciation, as Mr. Branch handed him the box, was perfectly turned. Jacquette was proud of his appearance, but she felt, through and through, the contrast between his reception and the one given to Bobs.

Marquis was admired; Bobs was loved. As the mass-meeting broke up, with the boys all crowding around their captain, she realised, with a sense of girlish elation, that she—Jacquette Willard—was going to her first dance, that night, with the hero of Marston High!

From that moment until the evening was done, she forgot Marquis's displeasure and lived in a fairy tale. Her feet scarcely staid on the floor while she dressed for the dance. The filmy blue gown, the white slippers, the long white gloves, even the sparkle of her own eyes and the glint of

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gold in her hair, as she saw herself in the mirror—all seemed new and bewitching.

“Tia! Tia! Am I really that girl in the glass, or is she a dream?” she cried, the roses deepening in her cheeks, as she caught her little aunt in her arms, just before she started. Then she found herself leaning back against the cushions of the carriage, and she turned a wondering glance on Louise, who sat beside her uttering commonplaces to Bobs and Ned, as if this were everyday life. After all, a girl needed to have grown up in Brookdale, Jacquette reflected, to understand the thrill of grandeur she had felt when that carriage door slammed.

She had the same thought again, a little later, when they all stepped out into the carpeted, covered way that led from the carriage to the entrance of the Lakeside Club. And, while she was thinking it, she entered into a fairyland of lights, of music, of gaiety, of excitement.

CHAPTER VII

THE "FOOL-KILLER"

AS soon as Jacquette opened her eyes, next morning, she closed them again, and tried to bring back the glittering scene of the evening before. Bobs had proved a perfect cavalier, as good a dancer as quarterback, and two o'clock had come before anyone remembered time. Yes, she could see the brilliant hall, the blue and gold decorations, the huge copy of the Sigma Pi pin done in electric lights on the wall just over the orchestra, the richly dressed mothers of two of the girls presiding at frappé, as chaperones of the occasion; she even heard strains of music, and carriage numbers being called, as they came out into the frosty air—but, all the time, she knew that it was

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past, and that nothing was left to happen. For weeks she had been looking forward to this dance. Now that it was over, the year stretched ahead in grey monotony.

After a few days, however, she awoke to the fact that another event, fully as exciting, though very different in nature, was looming in the near future. Two of her teachers warned her that she would have to do better work if she hoped to get through her half-yearly examinations in January.

Jacquette heard them in shocked astonishment. In Brookdale she had been the star of all her classes. It seemed unbelievable that she could be facing utter failure; yet the semi-final examinations, she knew, counted as much in the year's standing as the dreaded June finals themselves.

As she started for home that day, she was wondering, with a sick dread, how Tia would feel when she told her, and whether,

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if she really should fail, the Sigma Pi girls would carry out that dreadful threat of taking away her pin. At least, she made up her mind, if hard study from now on could avert the calamity, it should never come, and she began her campaign by resolutely refusing to join in a special frolic which was coming off in the sorority rooms that afternoon.

Her grandfather and Aunt Sula were both out, when she reached home; so Jacquette had the library to herself, and she set at work with a will.

Half an hour passed. Then she saw Rodney Fletcher, a grammar school boy, dashing across the street to her door.

“Give me shelter, Miss Willard?” he asked, breathlessly. “You know I’m coming up to high school in February, and the Beta Sigs and the Elks are both trying to pledge me now, so as to be sure of me when I get there. The Elks are bound to clinch the thing to-day, but I don’t want

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to give them an answer till I see what the Beta Sigs are going to do, and they've asked me down to their frat house to-night. I've skipped out, so my mother can tell the Elk boys I'm not at home. Oh, look! They're coming over here. Hide me somewhere!"

While he was speaking, Jacquette, entering into the fun, had hurried him into the dining-room, and had drawn the heavy curtains.

"Don't give me away, now! On your honour," was his parting injunction, as she turned to admit the delegation of Elks—but the whole affair took a different colour, a minute later, when the first Elk to walk in was Bobs Drake!

Playing a joke on Bobs was the last thing she had thought of. She had never before known him to take an active part in fraternity contentions; yet here he was, and there, in the dining-room, was Rodney, trusting her to keep him hidden.

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There was nothing to do but to carry it through, and explain to Bobs, afterward.

"We just stopped to ask if you'd seen Rod Fletcher to-day?" he was saying, as she reached this decision.

"Why, yes; he was here a little while ago," she answered, cautiously.

"We can't get track of him," put in another boy. "His mother says she doesn't know where he is."

"Does she? Well, he isn't at home, then. Mrs. Fletcher would tell you if he were," Jacquette assured them, beginning to enjoy the joke for its own sake, and feeling certain that Bobs was going to understand, later on.

"We won't stay. I see you're studying," Bobs said, considerately. "But we'd appreciate it if you'd put in a good word for the Elks with Rodney. We don't want the Beta Sigs to get him, because he's worth having."

"I'm sorry, Bobs," she answered, de-

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cidedly, "but I've promised Aunt Sula that I won't take sides with any fraternity. Besides, I doubt if Rodney would be influenced by anything I could say."

She had followed the boys to the door while she spoke, and, as they went down the walk, she heard them rallying Bobs on his failure to secure her as an ally. That bothered her, and she found it hard to get back into the spirit of study after Rodney had gone.

Next morning at school, the first thing she heard was that the Beta Sigmas had pledged Rodney at their fraternity house the night before, and this, coupled with the disturbing fact that Bobs was missing from school, altogether, for the next three days, had a demoralising effect on Jacqueline's good resolutions about work.

On the fourth morning she stopped Louise in the hall between bells to say,

"Wait a minute, Louise. Tell me what you know about Bobs? I saw him going

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upstairs, just now, but he wouldn't give me a chance to speak to him, even, and I don't understand why. Is it true that he's not coming back to school?"

There had been disturbing rumours about Bobs. He was quoted as having said that there was no special object in finishing his senior year, now that the football season was over. With his record as quarterback to help him, the boys said, he could easily get into college on the work he had already done. Yet now, on the day before the Christmas vacation, he had appeared again, and seemed to be attending his classes, as usual.

"Hush!" Louise answered. "Something dreadful happened in chemistry class, and Bobs has gone to the office, now. I can't stop, but I'll tell you all about it at noon."

"Gone to the office," meant an interview with the principal, and, all through her French recitation, Jacquette was wonder-

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ing what Bobs could have done. Over and over again, Mademoiselle's searching eyes and sudden questions brought her back to the subject, but, when the bell finally rang, the amount of French she had absorbed was very slight.

Then she and Louise flew together like magnet and needle. "Never mind luncheon!" said Jacquette. "Let's walk down the street where we can be alone. Now, tell me!"

"'Twas just this," Louise began obediently. "Some of the boys have been getting up an illustrated magazine called the 'Fool-killer'—just one copy, you know, on fine paper, pen and ink work, with illuminated initials—an awfully clever thing. It has caricatures of all the faculty, representing the teachers as saying ridiculous things against secret societies in high schools, and so on. The boys meant to circulate it by passing it around under desks until all the pupils had seen

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it. So, this morning, just as Mr. Talbot called the chemistry class to order, the magazine was handed to Bobs Drake, and, after a minute, he passed it over to me, opened at a killing picture of Mr. Talbot, talking against football with one side of his mouth and against fraternities with the other. I don't believe Mr. Talbot would have noticed Bobs handing me the magazine, but, Jacquette, you know my failing. The minute I saw that picture, off went my laugh—right there in class! I hadn't the slightest warning that it was going to happen. Never do, have, you know."

"Louise—you poor girl!"

"Well, Mr. Talbot was down at my desk in a flash, and, before I could do a thing, he had the 'Fool-killer' in his hand, looking it through. Wasn't it dreadful? There he stood, turning page after page, and we waited. At last he looked up at Quis, and said, 'Mr. Granville, do you hap-

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pen to know who executed this masterpiece? ' ' "

" Oh! Quis could have done it—but he wouldn't! "

" Well, there were two or three Beta Sigs sitting near Quis, and they sat up straight, but Quis held his head high, and said, ' Yes, sir, I do know. ' "

" No! "

" Yes. Mr. Talbot was surprised, too. Of course his next question was, ' Who did it? ' but Quis absolutely refused to answer. Then Mr. Talbot asked why he wouldn't answer, and Quis gave one glance over at the Elk boys, where Bobs was sitting, and said, ' Because I consider it dishonourable to tell tales of anyone! ' And, Jacquette, the class cheered! "

" But, Louise, you aren't going to say Bobs did it? "

" Wait till I get to that. Of course Mr. Talbot was angry at the cheering, and, next thing, turned on Bobs. "

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“ Well? ”

“ Bobs wouldn’t answer, either, but he did look at Quis as much as to accuse him of having given him away, I thought. We all expected it would end in Mr. Talbot’s sending them both to the office, but, instead, he went back to his desk and began the recitation. I guess he didn’t know that Quis was starting for New York, right after class, for he let him get away while he was talking to Bobs, and the end of it is that Bobs has gone to the office alone.”

“ And you think Bobs got up the magazine, and Quis knows, and won’t tell? ”

“ I—don’t know. You see, it stands against Bobs that he’s been out of school for several days doing no one knows what. There’s so much fine lettering in the magazine; it would take a great deal of time. And everyone knows how clever Bobs is at drawing, and how he loves a joke. I’m afraid.”

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"And I don't believe it! If Bobs had done it, he'd have owned up."

"But you don't stop to think, Jacqueline, that owning up would have meant bringing discredit on his whole fraternity. The Beta Sigs would crow so if the Elks got into disgrace. It isn't a bit like owning up alone."

"I know; but I don't believe it. If I could only get hold of Quis, I'd make him tell who did it. He said he knew. But his train has started by now."

"Yes, and you mustn't worry, dear. I dare say Bobs will come out of it all right. Everybody likes him so—teachers and all. I'm terribly sorry I laughed, but I just can't go without my luncheon on account of it. I'm starving. Come and get a sandwich. You'll feel better."

"No. I can't eat a thing!" And Jacqueline, starting back toward the school alone, turned the corner and met Bobs face to face.

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He would have passed, but she insisted on speaking and almost with the first words it came out that he had seen Rodney leaving her house, just after he and the other boys had been dismissed that day, and that his faith in girls had vanished with the sight. Of course the fellows had joked him, but that was the least of it. The part he could not get over was that he had believed Jacquette to be "square," and now she had proved herself "just like all the girls—tricky!"

Jacquette's explanation had waited so long that the words of it tumbled over each other. She looked very sweet and sorry, standing there, her face flushed with feeling, and, as she talked, the winter wind caught one of her curly yellow braids and tossed it over her shoulder. Bobs remembered, suddenly, that she had put her hair down in braids the day after he had said sorority girls were in too much of a hurry to be grown-up. He stamped the snow

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from his feet, irresolute—trying not to forgive her. Then he looked straight into her honest eyes, and, turning, walked back to the school at her side.

"I see how it was, Jack, and I'd like to shake hands on it," he said, as they reached the entrance. "I don't know when I'll see you again; I may not come back to school any more after vacation. I tried to quit, right after this Rodney Fletcher business, but my mother cried about it; so I couldn't. You know I haven't any father to make me do things, but when my mother cries it's the same thing. So I started in again, but now there's a new trouble, and I don't know what may come of it. I'm on my way home, in disgrace for refusing to answer questions in the office."

"I know what you mean; Louise told me," Jacquette answered, giving him her hand, "and I just want to say that I don't believe, for one minute, you ever did it."

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Bobs looked at her with an expression that she could not understand. Then, instead of saying, as she had hoped he would, that he had not done it, he merely repeated, "You don't believe it? I'm glad."

All the way upstairs to Mademoiselle's room, Jacquette was asking herself what Bobs had meant by that response, and the question was still troubling her when the closing hour came that afternoon, and Mademoiselle began to distribute the monthly report cards among the pupils in her study room.

Jacquette walked to the desk slowly, dreading to see hers, and she was not surprised when Mademoiselle, in passing it out, looked at her reproachfully.

"My little Willard, I am sorry," she said, gravely. "Will you stay and talk with me after school, honey?"

Jacquette scanned the figures on the card as she took her seat. She had fallen below, for the month, in algebra and

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physiography, and her standing, even in English and French, was near the danger mark.

"Sorry for you, dear," Blanche Gross whispered, as the pupils rose to file out of the room. "Come up to the sorority rooms when Mademoiselle's done with you, and tell us all about it."

When Jacquette lifted her eyes, she found herself alone with Mademoiselle.

"Come and sit here by me, dearie," began the French teacher, with one of those searching glances from under her dark eyebrows. "That is right. Now, chicken, you were meant to be a good little child. What can be the trouble?"

Her manner was gentleness itself, but it compelled an answer, and before Jacquette realised what she was doing, she found herself pouring out her troubles.

"I know, honey, I know!" Mademoiselle said, at the end. "I, too, have seen this wonderful 'Fool-killer.' There is one page

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with a very dreadful picture of a French lady who says 'lambkin' to the big boys!" She shrugged her shoulders ever so little. "That is mere fun! The part that worries me is, why did he not own up like a man when he was questioned?"

"Oh, Mademoiselle!" Jacquette reproached her. "You think he did it!"

"There is not one particle of doubt, my child. When he was in my French class, in this very room, two years ago, I took from him this same picture of the French lady saying 'lambkin.' No one else could have reproduced it so perfectly. But he was never a sneak in those days, and I cannot believe now, that he realises how his refusal to confess turns suspicion upon an innocent party."

"What innocent party? Not Quis? Does anyone think Quis did it?"

Mademoiselle stared blankly. "Dearie!" she said at last. "Honey! My little Willard! Your cousin Marquis did it!"

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"Quis did it! And then took credit for keeping still because it would be dishonourable to tell! And let the class cheer him—and made Bobs all this trouble. Mademoiselle! he couldn't! He has too much conscience."

"Conscience; ah, but he was not using Marquis Granville's conscience when he did this. He was governed by his fraternity conscience—a vastly different thing from the individual conscience, dearie. Whatever happened, he must not bring discredit on his Beta Sigma fraternity, don't you see? I, myself, know one dear little child with golden braids who has been writing English themes for another member of her sorority, just because she has the mistaken idea that her vow of sisterhood requires that dishonest act. But she was governed by her sorority conscience when she did it."

Jacquette flushed scarlet. She had not dreamed that anyone outside of the sorority knew how much she was helping

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Mamie Coolidge with her English. "Mademoiselle, you know every single thing we do!" she exclaimed.

"Not everything, honey, but more than you guess. You can fool the pretty, young teachers, but the little old French ladies with green eyes, they know—*they know!*" She shook her head solemnly, but the dimples came in her cheeks, and her eyes twinkled.

"You're not old, and your eyes aren't green!" Jacquette cried, impulsively. "You're perfectly darling! And oh—I do believe you're right about Quis. I see it all."

"There's no doubt of it, my chicken," Mademoiselle concluded, beginning to put away the books and papers on her desk. "Now you are to dismiss from your mind all the little Quisses and all the little Bobses, and not worry about them any more. I, myself, will write to that dear little wretch in New York. You shall give

The "Fool-Killer"

me his address. He will be sorry, for I know he has not meant to make so much trouble, and he will confess at once. You will see.

"For you, my sweet pet, it is certainly trouble enough that you must take home to dear auntie this abominable report card. But yet, remember, that is in the past. Your scholarship for the month of December has been sacrificed, honey; laid on the altar of—what? Shall we say, of a Sigma Pi Epsilon dance? Think it over, dearie, and see if I am right. And study a few hours every day in the Christmas vacation to make up back work. Then start again with the new year, pass your semi-final examinations, and begin the next half, in February, with the spirit of work. That is all, honey. You may go."

CHAPTER VIII

FEBRUARY RUSHING

MADEMOISELLE was a prophet. Her letter to Marquis brought back a prompt reply, addressed to the principal of the Marston High School, and confessing that the "Fool-killer," though it had been executed in the Beta Sigma fraternity house, was every stroke his work and entirely his fault. He offered an apology to every teacher caricatured, both for the personal affront and for his own error as regarded influence and example, and explained that, when he had refused to answer Mr. Talbot on the ground that it was dishonourable to tell tales, he had been led by a desire to amuse his Beta Sigma brothers—not in the least by a wish to turn suspicion on any other

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person. In fact, though he was ashamed to confess it, he had not once thought of that as a consequence of his act, until he had received Mademoiselle's letter.

The communication was frank and manly; Marquis Granville was president of the class which would be graduated from Marston in June; his record as a student had been exceptionally brilliant up to this time; and he was the son of a wealthy, influential citizen. One or all of these reasons may have worked in his behalf. At any rate, when he came back to school after the holidays, the matter had been hushed, and he and Bobs were both found in their old places.

Meanwhile, the Christmas holiday had been a merry, busy time for Jacquette. There had been numerous sorority engagements, the most important of which was the annual luncheon, given at one of the fashionable hotels for the entertainment of out-of-town chapters of Sigma Pi; but she

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had firmly declined invitations to three alluring fraternity dances, and had not only saved some hours for study, but had gladdened the hearts of her grandfather and Aunt Sula by finding time to show a little of the old Brookdale interest in the home Christmas celebration.

She had tried, too, to take Made-moiselle's advice about putting "the little Quisses and Bobses" out of her thoughts, and she came back to school in January with her face set in the right direction. All that month she studied hard, doing the best work of her year, and, when the semi-finals came, her marks averaged high enough to pass her in everything. They were not marks to be vain over, but at least they gave her the chance to go on and do better in the coming half.

Then came February, with its influx of new girls from grammar-school.

"You'll have to be easy with me this month, Tia," Jacquette said, as she was

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starting for school one morning in the first week of the new half. "February is the great rush time of the whole year for sororities; even more so than September. You see, the girls that get through grammar school in February instead of June are the brightest ones. That's the reason we go after them so hard. Of course I'm remembering our bargain, and I'm not going to let Sigma Pi interfere with my studies—not if I have to sit up all night to do them—but you mustn't expect me home right after school for awhile, because there'll be spreads and pledging and all kinds of things going on, every afternoon."

"It won't be keeping the bargain, though, if you have to 'sit up all night' to do lessons," Aunt Sula reminded.

"I know; I didn't mean *quite* all night!" Jacquette laughed, coaxingly. "And truly, Tia, it's a very special time, different from all the rest of the year."

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

Explain it to grandpa, please, so he won't worry. Oh, by the way," she called over her shoulder, as she hurried down the walk, "the girls were crazy over those sandwiches I made for the spread yesterday. They want me to bring thirty more just like them, Friday."

Aunt Sula smiled, and sighed, as she closed the door; but she would have sighed without the smile if she could have looked into one of the halls at Marston, a half hour later, where two semi-circles of excited, angry girls were lined up opposite each other, each with a spokesman in the centre of its group.

Blanche Gross was acting for Sigma Pi, with Jacquette Willard close at her elbow, while on the other side, Margaret Howland was peeping over the shoulder of Bertha Maxwell, the Kappa Delta leader.

The quarrel was about the new girl who had been pledged Sigma Pi the day before.

"We understand you stooped so low as

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to go out to Winifred's house, last night, and actually try to get her mother to make her take off her Sigma Pi ribbons!" Blanche was saying, hotly.

"We certainly did talk to her mother," Bertha Maxwell answered for the Kappa Deltas. "We intend that Winifred Pierce and her mother shall have their eyes open about Marston sororities. It's not fair to take possession of a girl and overwhelm her without giving her a chance to see other sororities and make up her own mind. We want Winifred to come to our spread this afternoon and meet our girls, and her mother said she could do it, too."

"Well, we say she can't, and what we say about our pledges counts just a little more than what their mothers say, you'll soon find out!"

"Oh, does it! That will sound so pleasant to her mother!"

"Go and tell her! Hurry! Take the first car! We've understood, before now,

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that Kappa Delta made a specialty of telling tales."

"Go right on, Blanche Gross!" Bertha flung back. "You can't trust your pledge to stay with you if she finds out about other sororities, that's the trouble!"

"No such thing! We'd trust her anywhere, but——"

"Never mind!" Bertha broke in, tragically. "Remember one thing: By fair means or foul, we'll have your pledge at our spread, this afternoon—see if we don't!"

A door opened. "My little children—my little children!" said the soft voice of Mademoiselle Dubois. "Tardy!—every one of you! Scamper, pets!"

The girls scattered. It was an incongruous sight, these tall, well-dressed young ladies, quarrelling like children. As they separated, with resentful glances at one another, Bertha drew Margaret's arm through hers, but Margaret looked back

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over her shoulder with a half ashamed expression, and Jacquette, meeting her eyes, remembered their happy friendship in Brookdale, and felt suddenly foolish.

As she turned to go into the cloak-room, Mademoiselle spoke to her. "My little Willard," she said, "in this school there are twenty-five teachers, all trying to pump knowledge of various kinds into the heads of a thousand or more little children. This is called getting a high-school education, but I ask you, honey, if these little heads are quite, quite full of something else, how can the knowledge be put in?"

Jacquette felt the force of this appeal, but, none the less, her strongest feeling, as she took her seat, was lively curiosity to know just what was being done to protect that Sigma Pi pledge from the Kappa Deltas.

At the beginning of second hour, she hurried into the hall and met Mamie Coolidge, who had all the news and told it

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eagerly. One of the Sigma Pi girls, she said, had gone to the principal and had him excuse her from the first two hours of school, on the plea that she must attend to some necessary business, and two more of the girls had secured the same kind of an excuse from their room teachers. Then they had gone out to the corner drug-store and had telephoned, not only to Winifred's mother, warning her against the dishonourable Kappa Deltas, but to some of the Sigma Pi alumnæ, and to certain mothers of Sigma Pi girls, who might do something during the day to influence Mrs. Pierce in favour of Sigma Pi.

"Did the girls cut two hours of school to do that telephoning?" Jacquette asked, uneasily.

"Oh, yes; 'twas nothing but study hours for any of them," Mamie answered, carelessly. "They didn't miss any recitations, at all. Mercy, that's the least they could do for Sigma Pi, if they're loyal, I should

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say! Oh, and Jacquette, Mrs. Pierce promised that Winifred shouldn't go to the Kappa Delt spread, and the girls have decided to have a special initiation to-morrow and take her in right away, just to show the Kappa Delt. That is, they want to if the rest of you agree. Blanche and Etta are planning it now. It's study period for them; so they can."

That was all Jacquette had time to hear, and she was late at her algebra class, as it was.

After school, the Sigma Pi girls met, and parcelled out the work for the initiation, next day. Blanche Gross offered her entire house, because her family was away, and Jacquette, besides bringing a cake, was appointed to act on the committee escorting Winifred to the place of her initiation. Accordingly at half-past nine the next morning, she went over to Mamie Coolidge's, where Winifred had been summoned to appear.

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Blanche lived only a few blocks from Mamie's home, but, as Winifred must be made to believe that her initiation would be in some mysterious quarter out at the north end of the city, it was necessary to blindfold her and give her a long street-car ride. So Mamie Coolidge and Flo Burton, both freshmen and both irrepressible romps, were decking her for the journey, as Jacquette came in.

They had braided her black hair in seven tight pigtails, each of which was so stiffly wired that they had been able to make it stand out in wonderful spiral twists, giving a Medusa effect that was quite startling. On the top of her head they had pinned a thimble-like opera bonnet of a fashion long gone by, and, for dress, she had on a long, bedraggled white petticoat, topped by a man's black coat, the tails of which were pinned up across the back in two large pockets. These pockets were filled with faded roses and ferns, and Winifred

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was to carry in both hands a large bunch of wilted carnations.

The finishing touch was the bandage over her eyes. It was a red bandana, padded with cotton, to prevent a single ray of light from getting in.

Jacquette had never seen a Sigma Pi pledge taken out on the street looking quite so much like a scarecrow, and, before they started, she took Mamie and Flo aside to remonstrate. But they declared, with giggles of delight, that they had received instructions from headquarters, and weren't going to have them interfered with by a freshman. So the party set out.

As they were going down the front steps, Winifred stumbled and nearly fell headlong. "Now, girls!" Jacquette exclaimed, speaking out before the pledge in forgetfulness of sorority rules. "You can't take Winifred on the car with her eyes bandaged like that. It's dangerous. It wouldn't do a bit of harm to loosen it

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just enough so that she could see the ground she's walking on."

"It certainly would do harm, for it's against orders!" Flo Burton insisted, in her most important manner, and, as she spoke, she took Winifred by the arm and turned her around several times. "Now, Winifred, follow my voice," she said.

Flo was chairman of the committee, and evidently meant to have that fact remembered, but there was one thing Jacquette could do, and that was to keep a close hold of Winifred's hand. She did this faithfully, telling her when to step up and down, and which way to turn, until at last, with a sigh of relief, she seated her safely in the car.

Most of the people who saw them get on, laughed at poor Winifred's plight. A few looked disgusted; everyone stared. Two rakish-looking fellows took advantage of the general merriment to attempt a flirtation with Jacquette, who sat as close



So Mamie and Flo were decking her for the journey

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to Winifred as she could without coming in contact with the spiky braids which stuck out dangerously in all directions.

The party rode to the end of the line and got off without mishap. Winifred was marched a little way in several directions, turned round and round till she was dizzy, to the amusement of a group of spectators who had stopped to watch the unusual sight, and then bundled on to the homeward car, thoroughly convinced that she was bound for the outskirts of the city.

As they started back again, Jacquette, still sitting by Winifred, caught a few words of what Flo and Mamie were saying in their seat across the aisle. They were discussing a spicy, original plan for the afternoon initiation, and they mentioned the name of a senior Sigma Pi who, Mamie was sure, would help them carry it through.

Jacquette knew enough of initiation methods to guess pretty correctly at the

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part she missed hearing, and into her thoughts, as the car rolled along, came that clause in her bargain with Aunt Sula, "Nothing that could offend the delicacy of a sensitive, modest girl."

Only lately, Louise and some of the other seniors had finished revising the Sigma Pi constitution so that there was nothing, now, in the written ceremony, which violated this condition, but it was evident that the girls intended to introduce their "stunt" as a surprise, and put it through before anyone had time to object.

At last, cautioning Winifred not to move until she came back, Jacquette slipped into the vacant seat in front of the other girls, and said,

"I couldn't help hearing, girls, and I just want to say, I wish you wouldn't. It seems to me it's cruel—and not very modest."

"There you go, Jacquette Willard!"

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Flo answered in an exasperated undertone. "You're nothing but a freshman, yourself, but you try to run the whole sorority. We know who's been putting Louise Markham up to spoil the Sigma Pi initiation! It's the tamest one in school, I do believe. A person might as well join a church and have done with it! It just makes me wish I'd gone some other sorority, where the girls believe in having a little fun!"

"But Flo," Jacquette protested, determined to keep her temper, "Winifred's so young, you know—only fourteen! And her mother asked us especially to give her an easy time, because she's so delicate. Her hands are cold as ice, now, and her heart's going like a trip-hammer."

"Pooh! What of it?" Flo retorted, and Mamie added, "What's an initiation good for, Jacquette, if it doesn't frighten them? You're too soft-hearted, that's the trouble with you."

Jacquette had intended to leave Wini-

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fred for only a minute, but the discussion held her, and block after block flew past while they sat there arguing. Suddenly, they all realised, with a start, that the car was stopping at their corner. Jacquette sprang to help Winifred, and the other girls followed in a rush, but they were late, and the conductor, either not noticing, or not caring, that Winifred was blindfolded, started the car with a jerk before she was off the step.

She might have fallen, anyway, for her foot had caught in the torn ruffle of the long white petticoat, but, with the sudden start, she lost her balance, pitched forward, plunging through Jacquette's arms as if they had been paper, and fell, face downward, with her head almost under the wheels of a passing wagon.

There were shouts from the passengers; the car stopped again, and nearly everyone jumped off to crowd around the spot where Winifred lay. Jacquette was down

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on the ground, trying, with shaking fingers, to untie the bandage that blinded Winifred's eyes, and shuddering at sight of the blood that flowed from a cut on the poor girl's cheek. Winifred was not unconscious, for she had groaned when they turned her, and had cried out,

“Oh, my knee! It's my knee, girls!”

The conductor was blustering about the idiocy of parents who allowed their daughters to do such things, when suddenly, a stout, sandy-whiskered man who had been engrossed with his newspaper in the rear car, came pushing through the crowd, and stopped in blank horror at sight of the grotesque little figure stretched out on the ground.

“Winifred!” he ejaculated, and Winifred—her eyes uncovered, now, her face bruised, her queer little bonnet tumbled off and trampled on, but her dreadful Medusa braids still rampant—reached out her hand to him, and answered piteously,

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“Oh, papa! Where did you come from? Were you on this car? Don't worry, darling! It's only—my initiation!”

Not one of the girls had ever seen Winifred's father, and not one of them could think of a person who would have been less welcome at that moment. He paid scant attention to them, however. His orders were quick and sharp, and a carriage was there to take Winifred home sooner than seemed possible. In the meantime, he had been examining her injuries, taking the conductor's number, and listening, now and then, to a fragment from the jumble of versions offered by the passengers who crowded about.

When he had Winifred safely in the carriage, he turned to Jacquette, whose murmured sympathy and offers of help had gone unheeded.

“I should like your name and address, young lady,” he said, without noticing the

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other frightened girls who had withdrawn into the background as soon as he appeared, and, when Jacquette had told him who she was, he added, with suppressed indignation, "I will take care of my daughter, now. As for you, I advise you to go on to the initiation you were planning, and tell your society that Winifred Pierce will never become a member of it as long as she has a father to take care of her."

"Papa! *No!*" came a pleading voice from the carriage, but her father stepped in and slammed the door, and they drove away.

Twenty minutes later, three dejected-looking girls presented themselves in the library at Blanche Gross's house, and told their story.

In spite of the impromptu character of the initiation planned for Winifred, the girls had taken advantage of their unusual freedom in Blanche's beautiful, empty

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home, to make the ceremonies even more elaborate than usual. A dozen of them had been flying around merrily, some making chocolate and arranging the table in the dining-room, while others, in the basement, prepared for certain mysterious business which was to take place there.

Now, they all sat, limp and speechless, except for broken exclamations of dismay, until at last, Mamie Coolidge broke the spell by saying,

“As far as I’m concerned, I think Winifred Pierce’s father owes us an apology! Everybody knows, nowadays, that you have a right to do anything you please at initiations!”

This was too much for Jacquette. Without stopping to consider whether she was a freshman or a senior, she began to speak her mind. She declared that, in her opinion, it was the Sigma Pi girls who owed the whole Pierce family an apology, whether it turned out that Winifred was

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seriously hurt or not, and, as she spoke the last word, Louise Markham applauded.

But Louise was alone, and no one followed. All around the room were resentful faces, and, little by little, the truth came out. Jacquette had made herself too much of a leader from the start. She wanted to manage everybody, and she had an idea that the whole sorority ought to bow down to her ideas. They weren't going to stand it any longer!

That was the substance of the complaint, and that was how it happened that, long before she was expected, Jacquette astonished Aunt Sula by walking into the house, and announcing dramatically,

“Tia, I'm done with Sigma Pi forever!”

CHAPTER IX

JACQUETTE'S REBELLION

DONE with Sigma Pi!" Aunt Sula echoed, not able to believe her ears.

But Jacquette, dropping into a chair and covering her face with both hands, had begun to sob. It was with an effort that she quieted herself to begin telling the troubles of the afternoon, but when she came to the description of the accident, her excitement dried her tears.

"And yet," she declared, at the end, "I would have stood by Sigma Pi through everything, Tia—you know I would—if the girls hadn't all turned against me, but everyone of them except Louise brought up some criticism. They said, if I was going to find fault with the sorority, I

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might as well know that the sorority had fault to find with me, and that, the truth was, I'd acted set up ever since they were so easy with me about letting me keep on my pin after my flunk in December. Then Mamie Coolidge showed out her jealousy of Louise. She said it wasn't sorority spirit for me to go so much with one girl to the exclusion of my other sisters. And Blanche Gross put in that she wouldn't say anything if I'd confine my attentions to Sigma Pi girls, but that I'd been seen bowing to non-sorority and non-fraternity people around school, and that I must know it was against sorority principles to do that.

"Oh, how angry that made me! I told her it wasn't against *my* principles, and I wasn't going to have my character all made over by any bunch of girls—not even my sorority—and that one thing I liked about Louise was the way she always spoke to everyone she knew around school,

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whether they belonged to sororities or not. Then Flo Burton said I might insist on bowing to them but I surely ought not to chum with non-sorority girls, and that she had noticed my walking to school with Fannie Brewster. And when I told them Fannie was poor, and that you thought she was lonely, Flo said, in the meanest way, 'Aunt Sula, again!' and two or three of the girls laughed, as if they had made a joke of it before.

"Do you think I could stand that? I came off and left them! And on the way home, I decided I'd make you happy, no matter how I felt myself, by telling you that I had done with Sigma Pi forever."

Jacquette had hardly stopped for breath since the beginning of her story, but now she lifted her tear-stained face to meet Aunt Sula's approval. To her surprise, it was not there.

"What about the vows of loyalty, sworn for life?" Aunt Sula asked her.

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"Where is the friendship that was going to bear criticism? This is its first test."

Jacquette's eyes dropped, but her voice was unyielding. "I can't help that," she murmured. "The girls were mean, and I'll show them there is such a thing as going a step too far, even in a sorority. I'm going to call up two or three of them this very night, and tell them I've decided to resign."

In spite of her unhappiness, Jacquette was getting a certain solace from imagining the effect of this announcement, but, before she had time to gloat over it, Aunt Sula astonished her still further by saying decidedly,

"Jacquette, I'm not willing **you** should resign."

"Not willing! When you've always wished I wasn't in it!"

"No; I'm not. If **you** break these vows like threads, because you're angry with the girls, you make it that much easier for

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yourself to break other promises and be untrue to other obligations. No; I want you to promise me, here and now, 'on your honour as a Sigma Pi' not to say one word about resigning, to any of the girls—not even Louise—for at least a week, and not then until we have talked it over again."

But instead of answering, Jacquette, who had risen to her feet in her amazement, put both hands to her head and wavered backward. "I'm so dizzy!" she said.

"Lie down on the couch. There; what is it?"

"Oh, it's nothing, I guess—only my head aches! I'm—so—tired!" And the worn-out girl, completely unstrung, buried her face in the pillow and wept hysterically.

All that afternoon, Jacquette lay in a darkened room, resting and thinking. Just before dinner, Louise ran in to say how remorseful the girls had been as soon as they realised that they had hurt her.

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“It came over them all at once that they had gone too far,” she said. “As soon as you left, they began to talk about the good work you had done for Sigma Pi, and, first we knew, it just turned into a meeting of praise for you. Mamie Coolidge and Flo Burton got one good lecture for the way they spoke about your aunt, and they’re dreadfully sorry.”

Jacquette felt her heart softening as she listened. The promise to Aunt Sula had been given, and, on the whole, she reflected, it was not a bad idea to wait a week before she acted.

As the evening passed, the telephone bell began to ring, and apologies and messages of love from the Sigma Pi girls came over the wire. It was hard to believe it, but Blanche Gross—proud, cold Blanche—was actually crying when she told Jacquette how sorry she was for what had happened at her house that day. There was news from Winifred, too. Some of the girls had

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been to inquire, and, though her father had all but shut the door in their faces, they had learned that she was not dangerously injured.

Then came a long, restful Sunday, and, by the time Jacquette started for school Monday morning, the world had begun to wear its natural colour. The sorority girls gathered around her effusively, and, when she went to her desk, she found a beautiful bunch of violets, bearing the message, "With the love of your Sigma Pi sisters."

Up to that instant, Jacquette had been secretly triumphing over the way she had brought the girls to their knees, but those words on the card went through her vanity straight to her heart, and her eyes were suspiciously shiny as she turned to smile her thanks at two Sigma Pi sisters who sat near. Then she heard the voice of Mademoiselle, summoning her to the desk.

"Dearie," said the little Frenchwoman,

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in a sorry tone, "you are wanted in the office, directly."

"Why, Mademoiselle! I haven't done anything!" Jacquette protested, and her head went up in a gesture that looked like defiance, though Mademoiselle, who loved her, knew that it was not.

"Wait, honey. Listen to me. Mr. Pierce is there with Mr. Branch and he is very angry about the way his little girl was treated on Saturday. She might have been crippled for life, or even killed, you know. It is a mercy that she was not. They will ask you questions, and, as I tell you, he is very angry. People who are angry do not choose their words. But you—will you remember one little thing? This: Between the extremes of servility and impertinence, there lies a golden mean called courtesy. Go, dearie."

As Jacquette went up the stairs, she knew that Sigma Pi was in trouble. The message of the violets was warm in her

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

heart. Surely, this was no time to desert the girls! Winifred Pierce's father was a detestable sort of man, anyway, that was plain, and her head went up at the thought. Then she remembered Mademoiselle's warning.

It was a long interview. Jacquette was pale when she came back to the study-room. She took her books and went to her algebra recitation without a glance at anyone. The Sigma Pi girls were in a flutter of anxiety, but there was nothing to do but wait.

Presently, Mademoiselle was called to the office, herself. Then she came back and sat at her desk in a brown study. At last she looked up and asked Mamie Coolidge and Flo Burton to step out into the hall with her.

As the door closed behind the three, she said, abruptly, "My chickens, tell me who was with the little Pierce at the time of her accident, Saturday?"

The girls looked at each other. Mamie

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spoke first. "I was, for one," she answered.

"I was, too," Flo added, reluctantly. "And Jacquette Willard."

Mademoiselle's face cleared, but she shook her head. "How it has come about I do not know," she went on, gravely, "but Mr. Pierce believes that the little Willard was the only one of you who was with his daughter, and he holds her accountable for every disgraceful detail of that trouble. He is very angry. He wishes to have her publicly reprimanded and he would be glad if Mr. Branch would even expel her from school. And she knows all about it, but she has not once mentioned your names!"

"Oh!" gasped both the girls together. Then something that, until now, had been asleep, woke within Mamie. "Is Mr. Pierce in the office, yet?" she demanded. "May we go straight up there and tell him all about it?"

"At once, dearie," Mademoiselle agreed,

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with alacrity. "Say to Mr. Branch that Mademoiselle Dubois gave you permission to come."

A minute later, two astonished men in the office were listening to a joint recital from two excited girls. Mr. Branch had received them sternly as they entered, his eye taking in the Sigma Pi pins they wore, with a glance of disapproval. He had been not only surprised, but shocked at the account given him by Winifred's father, and he was not disposed to treat the matter lightly. Mr. Pierce, his face flushed, his sandy beard bristling with indignation, had just risen, and was buttoning the coat of his light grey business suit, but he sat down again, and glared at the girls, while he listened.

Bit by bit, in broken sentences, it all came out. How Jacquette had tried to restrain them at the start; how anxious she had been to protect Winifred; how good her influence had always been in the so-

Jacquette's Rebellion

rority; how she had taken all the blame on herself when she was perfectly innocent; how dear and sweet she was; how everybody loved her—oh!——

“There! there! there!” broke in Mr. Pierce, his bluster all gone, as the girls began to cry, and he actually pulled out his own handkerchief to polish his glasses. “This puts a new light on things, I declare! Mr. Branch,” he said, turning to the principal, who, from behind his desk, was watching developments with keen eyes, “will you let me see that Willard girl again, now, right away?”

“Certainly,” was the answer, and, stepping to the door, Mr. Branch sent a messenger for Jacquette, while Mamie and Flo sat wondering what was going to happen next.

Mr. Pierce did not let them wonder long. As soon as Jacquette appeared in the doorway, he walked across the room with his hand outstretched. “My girl, I want to

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apologise," he said bluntly. "I don't like your sororities, that's true enough, and I won't send my daughter to any school that's in the clutch of such an octopus. As soon as she's able to walk I'm going to ship her off to some place where secret societies are tabooed. But I say, Mr. Branch,"—still grasping Jacquette's hand, he turned to the principal—"bad as these societies are, they can't be all bad, or they couldn't turn out girls that would stand by each other like this. I want to say that there's not a word of fault to be found with you," he declared to Jacquette, while the colour rushed into her sensitive face. "You tried to prevent the mischief, but you didn't shirk the blame, even when you had a right to. You were respectful, you were sorry—and the way you acted has brought the best there was in these two girls right to the surface. Mr. Branch, I withdraw my complaint. They won't do this thing again, and they've won that much from me

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by their loyalty to each other. As for you, my girl, I wish I had a son like you!"

Altogether, it made an exciting story to tell Aunt Sula after school, and it was a story with a happy ending, too, for, when Winifred's father had finally gone, Mr. Branch had dismissed the girls with nothing worse than a serious warning as to their manner of conducting future initiations.

The first thing Aunt Sula said was, "What a friend Mademoiselle is!"

"Tia, she's a wonder! She never pries around to find out things; she just understands; and she heads us away from trouble every chance she can get. How did she know I wasn't going to be respectful to Mr. Pierce? But I wouldn't have been, without her warning."

"I've been wondering what she would think of your determination to resign from Sigma Pi. Suppose you ask her?"

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Jacquette's face grew warm, but she did not drop her eyelids. "I've been thinking that over, to-day," she answered. "Tia, do you realise that, in order to resign, I should have to let the girls expel me? The promise is; 'Once a Sigma Pi always a Sigma Pi,' unless you're put out."

"Yes, I know. You told me."

"And it wouldn't be my own sorority alone that would know about it. Of course every chapter of Sigma Pi would be told, but, besides that, an official notice would be sent out to every fraternity and sorority in Marston, stating that Jacquette Willard had been 'dishonourably expelled.' No reason would be given—just the fact."

Aunt Sula waited.

"I really haven't any friends at school outside of Sigma Pi," Jacquette went on, slowly. "If I should resign, all my friends would be my enemies."

"Suppose some of the girls should decide to go out with you?"

Jacquette's Rebellion

“And break up Sigma Pi! and let the Kappa Delts triumph over us! I couldn't bear it! And the girls wouldn't go with me, either. When it came to the point, they couldn't! I'd resign alone, and I'd be alone. The other sororities wouldn't have anything to do with me, and, even if there were any non-sorority girls worth knowing, they wouldn't want me, after I had been expelled from Sigma Pi. That's true, Tia.”

“Oh, Jacquette! Among so many, there must be some nice ones who haven't joined sororities because their parents didn't approve of them, or because they couldn't stand the extra expense, or some such reason. You'd find them out before long.”

“No. You can't understand till you've been there. The nice girls who aren't allowed to join some sorority are so unhappy at Marston that their parents have to send them somewhere else. You see Mr.

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Pierce is going to take Winifred away. Besides," Jacquette ended, irrelevantly, "Quis and Bobs would both despise me if I deserted my sorority. They think girls are always fighting, anyway. They say we don't know how to be real friends to each other."

"But had you forgotten all these things when you said you wanted to resign, Jacquette?"

"No, I hadn't. I counted the whole cost on my way home, that day, and I thought I could face it for the sake of punishing the girls. And it isn't remembering these things that makes me feel differently, now, Tia. It's—it's—oh, it's that bunch of violets, with its message, don't you see? They're a darling bunch of girls, after all. I love them, Tia. I—don't see how I could resign from Sigma Pi!"

Jacquette looked as if she expected to be laughed at for the confession, but there

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was not a shadow of a smile on Aunt Sula's face as she answered,

"I'm not surprised, dear. I know you love the girls, and I'm learning to feel the net that closes about you when you consider cutting loose from the sorority. But I want you to think of everything. If you stand firm for what you believe to be right, you'll have these same clashes of opinion over and over, with each new set of girls that comes into Sigma Pi. Then, another thing: you will be expected, more and more, to take your part in the delegations that make out of town trips to form new chapters, the way the juniors and seniors have to do, now, and the amount of money and time and strength you'll have to spend, is bound to increase, instead of growing less. Now, is it all worth while?"

"But I don't understand, Tia! First, you wouldn't let me resign, and now——"

"I know; I couldn't have you break

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your vows in a fit of anger, but I do want to say this: If the time ever comes when you make up your mind deliberately, without any personal pique, that the sorority is a mistake—that you're using the best of your efforts to build up something that really ought not to be—remember, I'll stand by you."

Jacquette's face was earnest, as she leaned forward to answer. "That time will never come, Tia," she said. "I never realised until to-day what an influence I have over the girls, and I'm going to use it in the best way. For one thing, I'm going to begin new, next week, and show everybody what a good student a sorority girl can be. And I'm going to stand by Sigma Pi, and help her grow into the best, biggest high-school sorority in the whole United States!"

CHAPTER X

COMMENCEMENT

JUNE. The month when all the trees in the city parks are waving soft green arms and whispering secrets about how beautiful it must be now, away out in the real country.

Jacquette was thinking of Brookdale, as she walked slowly home after school; wondering if the birds were singing there, this year, just as they always had before, every year since she could remember.

Suddenly she quickened her steps. Someone was coming behind her, and of all things she did not want Bobs to think she was loitering for the sake of having him walk with her! She turned a corner and set off at a brisk pace.

"Oh, Jack! Couldn't you go a little faster?" a voice called.

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“Couldn’t you come a little slower?” she laughed, turning and waiting until he came up, breathless.

“I’ve raced five blocks while you were going one,” he declared, as they fell into step together. “Had to go over to Ned Woodward’s first, and I was afraid you’d get away. I have a lecture to give you.”

“Proceed, honourable highness! Don’t you see how meek I look?”

“No, I don’t. I see how pale and tired you look. You’re not the same girl that came here from Brookdale last fall.”

“A few still like me, though!” put in Jacquette, with a mimic pout.

“A few, indeed! Yes; and my lecture’s no sign I don’t.”

“Please, sir, where is the lecture?”

“Look here, Jack, I’m in earnest. You’re four years younger than I am, and I’ve been studying your case—you needn’t laugh—and I’ve made up my mind that

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you take your sorority too hard, for one thing. You girls all do. You put it ahead of everything else, and it wears you out. Now, I'd like to see you make up your mind that next year you'll spend more time in gym, and less on sorority business. Why don't you go in for basketball?"

"Dr. Bobs Drake!" Jacquette mocked, but she liked the lecture, for all that. "Look at Louise Markham! She's a sorority girl, and a splendid student and a picture of radiant health, at the end of her high-school course. Now, where's your argument?"

"Jack," he answered, "I don't know what the sorority cause is going to do, next year, when Louise goes off to college. Have you ever noticed how she's the one girl that's always pointed at, to prove that sororities aren't harmful? She's a stunning argument, but I don't know another girl anywhere who can carry all the

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school work and all the social business she can, and not get fagged. You know very well that, with most of them, the school work has to go under. Isn't that so? Honest, now."

"What about fraternities?" Jacquette evaded. "You're a pretty one to preach, with your pin right there in sight!"

"Oh, boys are different. We have a lot of fun, but we don't get tragic over it and have hysterics and nervous prostration the way the girls do. Do you suppose my fraternity ever kept me from eating three square meals a day? I don't believe it has interfered with my studies much, either, for that matter."

"If that isn't just like a boy!" Jacquette retorted. "Fraternities are all right for them, but sororities are bad for girls! You ask any of the teachers at Marston, and I'll wager they'll tell you there isn't much choice between frats and sororities! Anyway, Bobs Drake," she

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added, shifting base with feminine agility, "so far as school work is concerned, my sorority hasn't interfered with mine one bit more than football has with yours."

"You can't tell me anything about that," he admitted. "And I've played my last football, too."

"You've played—your last——?"

"That's right. I'm going to college on a new basis. The curriculum requires enough athletics to keep a fellow in trim, and that's all I'm going to have, after this. It's no use pretending that a fellow can do his best work on his studies when he's so tired that it's all he can do to sit up. I'm face to face with the business of being a man, Jack."

Jacquette walked a little way, dumb with astonishment.

Bobs Drake forswearing football! She was almost afraid of him! But at last she turned.

"Robin Sidney Drake!" she said,

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“You make me so proud of you, I don’t know how to express it!”

To say that Bobs looked pleased, tells nothing. His whole face beamed.

“My! *You make me* as happy as a big sun-flower!” he answered, fervently.

They were almost home, now.

“Robin Sidney Drake,” he repeated, presently. “That’s the way you’ll have to address the envelopes when I’m at college, next year.”

“What envelopes, sir?”

“Well, I was thinking of mailing you some catalogues, and I hoped you might acknowledge them.”

They both laughed, the laughter of light-hearted comrades.

“Won’t you come in?” Jacquette asked, holding out her hand for the books he had been carrying.

“Can’t do it. Have to work on my class prophecy. You got me into trouble last November, when you made me write that

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sonnet, young lady. I'm doing this prophecy in rhyme, and it's turning my hair grey."

"I'm wild to hear it! You and Quis will be the only ones to represent the class, Friday night, won't you? What are you going to prophesy for Quis, Bobs?"

"Oh, there was only one thing to do for him. I've made him a diplomat, with a strong prospect of becoming Secretary of State."

"Good! And Louise?"

"I had a time deciding about Louise. She's so versatile, she might turn out to be anything. At first I couldn't think of one talent that was more conspicuous than the rest, but I struck it at last. I'm not going to tell, though. I want to keep it for a surprise. Say, Jack,"—Bobs had started, but he turned on his heel and came back—"there's one thing that bothers me. Quis has never felt right toward me, yet. I don't believe anybody else at Mars-

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ton has anything against me, but he never looks me in the eye if he can help it. And I care. I want to quit friends."

"It's too bad, Bobs," she sympathised. "Why can't he let bygones be bygones? I think you had as much to forgive as he, after that 'Fool-killer' performance. But don't worry. You've done all you could. Good luck to the prophecy!"

The Assembly room at Marston High School was far from being large enough for the audience which always attended the graduating exercises, and the custom was to rent a neighbouring hall for the June celebration. It was Friday evening, eight o'clock, and every seat in the hall was filled. On the stage, framed by garlands of green stuff and roses, sat the principal, the faculty, the graduating class, and the boys' and girls' glee club. Through the open window the soft June breeze crept in, gently stirring fluffy locks and filmy ruffles.

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In the front seats, as usual, there was a picturesque row of Sigma Pi girls, but their ranks were thinned, that night. Five of them were on the platform, saying farewell to Marston High. Louise Markham was one of the five, and, from her seat with the class, she smiled straight down into the adoring eyes of Jacquette Willard who was almost hidden behind the mammoth bunch of pink roses she had brought for Louise, while Aunt Sula, sitting with her white-haired father, watched the loving looks exchanged between the two girls, and thought regretfully how much Jacquette would miss Louise's companionship in the year that was coming.

Then the piano sounded, and the glee club stood up to sing.

Everything moved like clockwork. Mr. Branch's remarks were in an unusually happy vein; the glee club outdid itself; Marquis's address as class president was a gem—"worthy of a college graduate,"

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his hearers declared—and, last of all, came Robin Sidney Drake, class prophet.

The enthusiasm was uproarious as Bobs took the front of the stage. Everybody there knew what always happened when Marston's beloved Bobs tried to make a speech, and it seemed as if the haunting fear that his tongue might cleave to the roof of his mouth when he tried to prophesy kept his audience cheering and cheering to put off the evil moment.

But if that was true, the fears were wasted. Bobs had committed the prophecy to memory—and he did not forget.

Perhaps it was because they were surprised at his ability to speak, at all, that his prophecy seemed so good; perhaps it really was a wonderful piece of wit. In either case, he kept his hearers convulsed with merriment from the first word to the last. All over the house, solemn faces broadened into grins; tears rolled down the cheeks of dignified teachers; and it was

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only by the greatest effort that anyone stopped laughing, after each sally, long enough to let him pronounce the next.

The principal, the teachers, the members of the class, had been told off in the prophecy, until Louise Markham was the only one left. Bobs paused abruptly and glanced in her direction. Then he said to the audience in a confidential tone:

“Wouldst know how future years shall
celebrate Miss Markham’s name?

She’ll have to sell that laugh to
phonographs;

Its rippling cadences must surely bring
her endless fame,

For,—list a moment, while Louisa
laughs!”

He turned, and flourished his hand toward Louise, with the air of a showman. There was a second of absolute silence. Then, as the drollery of the situation

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flashed upon her, the red lips parted, and out bubbled the irresistible laugh!

Bobs made a low bow of gratitude to her, another to the audience, and modestly took his seat, amid shouts of laughter and rounds of applause.

It was a long time before Mr. Branch could quiet the audience, for it seemed as if the event of the evening had taken place, but when people finally caught a hint of what he was trying to say, they leaned forward and listened, eagerly enough.

He was about to present the University scholarship, which was carried off each year by the brightest star of the graduating class, and he was explaining, as he always did, that it was awarded, not only in recognition of good scholarship, but of exemplary deportment during all the four years of high-school work.

Most of the pupils who knew the history of Marquis Granville's last year at Marston thought they remembered one

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good reason why he should not get that scholarship, and yet, somehow, in spite of this, they all expected that his name would be the one pronounced. Instead, to their surprise, they saw the principal, in closing, step forward toward Bobs Drake,—no, past Bobs Drake. He laid the precious document in the small, white hands of Louise Edwina Markham.

Nobody had expected it, and yet, as soon as it had happened, everybody felt that it was the right ending to the story—and everybody proceeded to express that feeling. The blood rushed to Louise's cheeks and her dark eyes shone, but she kept a sweet composure through all the long hand-clapping and until the last word of the closing song was sung and the end of the programme announced.

At that instant, Jacquette, her face glowing with pride and gladness, made a dash for Louise, but, oddly enough, before she could reach her idol, she came

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face to face with Quis and Bobs, who happened to be crowded close together in the confusion following dismissal.

Both boys saw her coming, and, each taking it for granted that she was rushing straight toward him, held out his hand. Like a flash, before either could feel his mistake, the quick-witted girl caught both hands, one in her right and the other in her left.

“Boys, you were splendid! You were glorious!” she cried, straight from her heart. “Quis, your address was great; and Bobs——”

The words failed, for, suddenly, she felt the barrier of constraint between the boys, and, with a swift impulse, not stopping to fear consequences, she drew their two right hands together, and darted one appealing glance at Quis.

This time he did not fail her.

“Yes, old man, you’re the one to be congratulated,” he cried, grasping Bobs’s

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hand so quickly that Jacquette's part was almost lost. "My speech was an everyday oration, but that prophecy of yours was a stroke of genius. We're all proud of it, I tell you!"

Bobs's face lighted up. He tried to speak, but, before the words could form, his blue eyes had said it all, and Jacquette, standing close to them both, murmured, with a tremble in her voice,

"Oh, boys—I'm so glad!"

At that moment, the gentle fingers of Mademoiselle Dubois were laid on the clasped hands of the two young men.

"My little peacocks!" she said caressingly, with a quick, understanding glance from one to the other. "I am ravished to see the heroes of the evening clasping hands!"

"Bobs Drake, you sinner!" struck in a merry voice from over Jacquette's shoulder. "How dared you? And to think that I should help you to disgrace me in

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my last moments at Marston! I acted just like a trained animal!"

"Louise! Louise! That scholarship!" Jacquette half-shrieked, whirling around and venting her deferred congratulations in a smothering embrace. "Here come the Sigma Pi girls to hug you! Look out for yourself!"

With the Sigma Pi girls came the fond mothers and fathers, the grandfathers and Aunt Sulas, the Uncle Macs and Aunt Fannys, the brothers and sisters, and all the rest of the proud, happy friends.

Everybody's face was covered with smiles; everybody's voice was bright with gladness; but, through all those blithesome moments, in the depths of one girl's heart, was running an undercurrent of feeling that no one guessed.

She kept it hidden until she and Aunt Sula were quite alone at home. Then she put both hands on the little woman's shoulders, and said, in a low voice.

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“Tia, I saw you when they gave Louise that scholarship. I saw the look on your face. It was just a look of yearning envy, and Tia—don’t deny it!—it was because you knew my first year’s marks were so low that I couldn’t get the scholarship, now, no matter how I might try, the rest of the time. There isn’t any chance to get it, now, and oh—the reason I feel the worst is because I can’t help knowing that my sorority has lost me the chance!”

She hid her face on Aunt Sula’s shoulder. “I don’t know how Louise ever managed to be a sorority girl and a good student, too,” she murmured. “The rest of us can’t. Tia, I believe I’d give up anything if I could only get back the chance of winning that scholarship—for you!”

Aunt Sula patted her tenderly. “There’s something I care for more than scholarships, Jacquette,” she said, cheerily, “and you haven’t lost your chance for that. It’s the development of character;

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learning to see things in their relative proportions—and to choose the best things. That stands before high marks, I think, though high marks are almost sure to be a part of it.”

There was silence for a minute; then Jacquette lifted her face. “Do you mean,” she asked, doubtfully, “that if I were to try just as hard, in studies and deportment, from now on, as if I were working for that scholarship with a real chance of winning, it would be worth as much as the scholarship itself, to you?”

“More!”

Jacquette’s hand moved toward her heart, and drew back, irresolute.

“Tia,” she begged, her voice breaking, “do you believe it’s actually true, as the girls say, that if I resign from Sigma Pi, I won’t have any friends in school—not one?”

She stood, in the white gown she had worn that evening, all unconscious of the

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commanding power of her youth and sweetness, and the little woman who loved her with a great love, looked up into her face. "No," she answered emphatically. "It is not true!"

Slowly, Jacquette's hand moved again to the Sigma Pi pin on her breast, unclasped it, and held it in her hand.

"I've made up my mind to do it," she said.

CHAPTER XI

COMPROMISE

WHEN Jacquette came down to breakfast the next morning, looking pale in spite of her fresh pink and white gown, her grandfather stood at the foot of the stairs waiting, and, as she paused on the last step, he put both hands on her shoulders, and kissed her.

Not a word was said about the missing Sigma Pi pin, but Jacquette, glancing past him, saw the tremulous smile on Aunt Sula's face, and knew that both these dearest people on earth understood how hard it had been for her to make the decision of the night before, and were keeping back the expression of their own gladness, for her sake. It touched her deeply to realise

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how much the gentle old man had really cared, during all the months when he had kept so silent, and the answering hug she gave him spoke her feeling as plainly as words.

After that they went to the table and chatted about the graduating exercises, Bobs's prophecy, and Louise's honours as lightly as if no such thing as resignation from a sorority had ever been thought of, until, just as they were rising from breakfast, Aunt Sula happened to say,

"Of course Uncle Malcolm and Aunt Fanny were disappointed that Quis didn't take the scholarship, but it must have been easier for them to see Louise carry it off than anyone else. She's such a pet with them, they couldn't help being glad."

Then Jacquette's grandfather, slipping one arm around his little, dark-haired daughter, and the other around the tall girl he called "Goldilocks," said slowly,

"I suppose the Markhams think they're

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the proudest, happiest family in town this morning—but they're not."

He was looking into Jacquette's eyes as he spoke, and, in spite of a choking sensation in her throat, she smiled back at him bravely while she squeezed Aunt Sula's hand. It was a comfort to feel that they all understood without words.

Before the morning was over, Jacquette slipped away for a talk with Louise, and when she came back, she went straight to Aunt Sula's room.

"Tia," she said, "don't think I'm weakening, but Louise advises me not to take off my pin yet and not to say a word to any of the girls until they all come together again at the beginning of the fall term. There won't be any sorority doings in vacation, anyway, and some of the girls have gone away for the summer already, and several more start to-day, and she says if I should tell the few that are left, they would begin to write letters to the others

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giving their versions of the matter, and my reasons wouldn't be half as well understood as if I went to the first sorority meeting of the year myself, and explained it to them all at the same time."

"That sounds sensible; perhaps she's right," Aunt Sula agreed. "How does she feel about what you're going to do?"

"Oh, she's the same trump as ever. At first she felt that I couldn't do it—that I wouldn't be able to stand the way the girls would act, but after that, she praised me until I felt foolish. But still——" Jacqueline stopped as if sorry she had begun the sentence.

"Well?"

"She says, Tia, that if she were going to be here in high school another year, she's afraid she couldn't follow my lead. It would be more than she could bear to have all the Sigma Pi girls turn against her."

There was a silence before Aunt Sula

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answered, "Never think, dear, that I don't appreciate how hard it is."

"And don't you ever think I'm going back on it," Jacquette cried, brushing away a few tears that had come in spite of her. "Will you explain to Grandpa why I put this on again? I—I'd rather not have to speak about it." She walked to the mantel where the Sigma Pi pin had lain all night. "Tell him I'm just going to wear it until school begins. Louise says it would start questioning if I happened to meet any of the girls without having it on, and she thinks it will be so much better to tell them all together, myself."

"Yes, I'll tell him," Aunt Sula promised, watching Jacquette's tender glance at the little pin. "Does it really mean so much more to you than any other piece of jewellery?"

"Oh, it does! It stands for so many things—all my Marston good times—all my friendships with the girls. Why, any-

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body else but you would think it was perfectly foolish if I should tell how it makes me feel to think of leaving off that pin. But there!—we're not going to talk about it all summer. Where's that dimity you said I could make into a waist? If I'm going to be an accomplished dressmaker before vacation's over, I mustn't lose any time."

So she plunged into the summer, determined not to make her sacrifice unlovely, and she succeeded, through all the busy weeks that followed. In July there was a visit to Brookdale, and after that, by her sweetest wiles, she coaxed her stay-at-home grandfather into a bracing trip on the lakes with Aunt Sula and herself, and brought him home feeling years younger and happier.

Then came a series of farewell boat-rides and picnics in the park, with Louise and Marquis and Bobs, for the two boys had honestly buried the high-school

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hatchet on the night of their graduation, and they and Louise were bent on making the most of these last days with Jacquette before starting away for their first year of college work. There was no end to the frolics they planned and carried out, until suddenly, in the midst of all the hurry and fun, came the opening day of school at Marston High.

Except Louise, Marquis and Bobs were the only ones outside of home who had been told Jacquette's intention in regard to her sorority. Bobs had received the news very quietly. "It'll take sand," was his one comment, "and you have it."

But telling Marquis had been another matter.

"It's a quixotic attitude, imported from Brookdale, and you'll find it doesn't belong in Channing," he had declared. "Aunt Sula and grandfather mean all right, I know, but their ideas are old-fashioned about some things and nobody will get

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your point of view, at all. Everybody at Marston will set you down as funny. I'm going to have mother go over and talk to Aunt Sula."

The next day Aunt Fanny had come, and had said a great deal in her own forceful way about the pity of making Jacqueline a social outcast for the remaining three years of her high-school life, especially after Marquis had interested himself so much to get her nicely started with the right girls. It was only the course of nature, she maintained, that, in a public school where all classes were thrown together, the carefully brought-up girls should band together, and be separated from the rabble.

Sula Granville's answer had been that, though she was glad of Jacqueline's decision, she had never urged it, and, true to the spirit of this, she told her every word that Aunt Fanny had said. Apparently, there was no result, but the warnings found

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a sensitive spot, none the less, and they were all surging through Jacquette's mind when she stood up at the first sorority meeting of the year, and faced her Sigma Pi sisters.

It was a sparse little gathering, compared with the last one of the spring before. Some of the girls had moved during the summer; others had been graduated; still others had broken off their course at Marston to go away to a finishing school. The Sigma Pi ranks would soon be filled by new girls—in fact there were five or six being rushed, even now—but, to-day, there were less than a dozen at the meeting.

For a minute Jacquette's words refused to come. She remembered Bobs's faith: "It'll take sand—and you have it." At the same instant, she met the loving eyes of Louise, sitting there in all the dignity of an alumna, among the other girls. She knew very well why Louise had taken time, in the hurry of preparation for her year

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away from home, to come to that meeting, and the knowledge helped. Then she thought of Tia, and began.

It was a simple, straightforward story, told with evident effort, and listened to in breathless silence by the girls. As Jacqueline went on, a blank dismay grew on all the faces, but to her relief there was not a trace of the unfriendly resentment and bitterness that she had dreaded. It dawned upon her, while she stood there speaking, that a very different feeling had grown up between herself and the girls since the quarrel of almost a year before, and the thought added a new hurt to the step she was taking, but it did not make her falter.

She told them frankly how the first half of her freshman year had been so filled to overflowing with sorority business and sorority fun that her studies had been a farce; how she had often been actually crowded into the necessity of preparing

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one lesson during the recitation of another. She reminded them of her failure to pass for the month in two studies, just before the semi-finals, and of her determination, after that, to show everybody that she could be a sorority girl and a student, too, an undertaking which had proved too much for her physical strength.

“But it isn’t only on account of scholarship and health that I’m saying this,” she finished, honestly. “The truth is, girls, while I love you all as much as ever, I can’t help knowing that I do owe something to my home and the people in it. Last year, it was just a place to rush into for eating and sleeping. My interests were all somewhere else. Another thing: I haven’t a rich father, the way most of you have. I haven’t any father living. There is a certain sum of money set aside for my education, but it isn’t large, and the proportion of it that went into my first year at Marston was so much more than it had any

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right to be that the one reason of expense is enough to make me feel that I ought to give up being a Sigma Pi."

Jacquette felt her knees begin to shake as she reached this period, and she sat down rather abruptly. For a minute no one made a sound.

Then Mamie Coolie, leaning forward, asked in a horrified tone,

"Jacquette, you can't mean you're going to make us expel you?"

Jacquette's face quivered, but she managed to answer steadily, "I suppose it's the only way."

"Oh!" "How dreadful!" "But we *can't* expel Jacquette." "Tell her she's wild to think of it." "Talk her out of it, Louise," were the whispers that flew round the room. Flo Burton sprang to her feet to protest, but she sat down again, sobbing, and then handkerchief after handkerchief went up as the girls saw that there were tears in Jacquette's own eyes.

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Etta Brainerd, who was presiding, still sat in dumb amazement, trying to grasp the full significance of the thing, when Louise Markham's voice caught the attention of everybody.

"I just want to remind you, girls," she was saying, quietly, "that inactive membership excuses a member from all duties connected with the sorority. She isn't required to help in the rushing, to go to spreads or initiations, in fact to do anything. She doesn't have to pay dues. She simply wears her pin and is just as much one of us as ever in her spirit toward us and ours toward her. She's allowed to know sorority secrets and she gets bids to the dances and all that, just like an alumna, and the best of it all is that no one outside of the sorority has to be any the wiser. There's not a thing about inactive membership that could possibly interfere with one's scholarship, or one's health, or one's pocket-book, and if the time comes when

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circumstances permit the inactive member to become active again, all she has to do is to say so. Of course I don't want to dictate, when I'm not going to be here myself, but I just offer these remarks as a suggestion."

"That's the thing!" Flo Burton exclaimed, as Louise took her seat.

"That's what we'll do!" "Make her inactive for a year." "You needn't do a bit of work, Jacquette, but we can't spare you and we just *couldn't* disgrace you before the whole school. We love you too much."

"Oh, I'm so glad you spoke of that, Louise!" cried all the girls together, throwing the order of the meeting to the winds as they crowded about the chair where Jacquette sat, her face flooded with sudden gladness.

Louise had not given her an inkling of what she meant to do, and Jacquette had never thought of hoping that the girls

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might cling to her, regardless of her active usefulness to the sorority. The whole spirit of the meeting was so different from the thing which she had braced herself to endure that it swept her along, unresisting, and it began to seem as if she had created, in her own imagination, a boggy which never existed. What harm could there be in simply keeping the friendship of the girls?

"Oh, Louise," she whispered, eagerly, catching the hand of her closest friend, "do you think it's all right? Would Tia be just as well pleased?"

"Don't see why not," was the sturdy answer. "It gives you back all your time for study and home things, and just prevents your losing the friendship of the girls you like best. I think she'll be glad, or I shouldn't have proposed it."

So it was settled, and when Jacquette, still wearing her pin, walked home with a body-guard of devoted Sigma Pi girls fol-



*As they crowded about Jacquette, her face
flooded with sudden gladness*

Compromise

lowing to the door, it seemed as if a great cloud had rolled out of her sky. Inactive membership would have seemed impossible before the moment when she had made up her mind to endure actual expulsion, but now, with its promise of comparative secrecy, its assurance of continued friendship from the girls, and its possibility of a return to activity sometime in the future, it glittered like a beautiful reward of virtue.

She was so sure of having done the right thing that it was hard to be patient and explain, when Aunt Sula and her grandfather seemed doubtful, but she succeeded, and, when she finally went upstairs alone, she smiled at a happy Jacquette in the mirror, resolving that Tia should see, from day to day, how truly inactive membership would give all the benefits and none of the drawbacks of the uncompromising other plan.

Jacquette was early at school the next

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

morning, and Mademoiselle gave her an approving nod. Then she asked her to help two new pupils in making out their programme.

It happened that they were both girls who had been singled out the day before as possible members of Sigma Pi, and, though Jacquette fully intended to keep out of the rushing, she was glad of an innocent chance to lend a hand, and proceeded to make herself as attractive as possible. While doing so, she took such a fancy to the younger of the two, a shy little brown-eyed girl named Mary Elliott, that at noon she found herself watching for them to come out of their class so that she might take them under her wing and show them the best kind of sandwich to buy at the "eat-house."

As the three went out of the school building together, they met a group of Jacquette's Sigma Pi sisters, with two more new girls, and all fell in together.

Compromise

"Isn't that a Sigma Pi Epsilon pin you have on?" Mary Elliott asked of Jacquette, who nodded with an odd little ripple of gladness over her face.

"Marion, that settles it for me?" said Mary to the other girl.

"Settles what?" Jacquette inquired.

"Oh, nothing; only two sororities have asked us to their spreads this afternoon, and I want to go to the Sigma Pi Epsilon one, if that's what you belong to."

"Well, I should say! So do I," Marion Crandall chimed in promptly, with a bold, black-eyed glance at Jacquette, which, though it was meant to be flattering, did not altogether please her.

"Do all the girls that go to this school belong to sororities?" Mary Elliott asked Jacquette in a timid undertone.

"Mercy, no!"

The innocent question brought a smile to Jacquette's face.

"All the nicest ones, then?"

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

“Well, a nice girl that didn’t make a sorority would have a pretty lonesome time at Marston,” Jacquette was admitting, when Blanche Gross suddenly whirled around and offered them hot roasted peanuts from the bag she carried.

“Jack, do you know about these four Marys?” she asked, laughingly. “You have two with you, and I have two more here. Let me make you acquainted with Mary Barnes from St. Paul and Marie Stanwood from Omaha.”

“And here’s Marion Crandall and Mary Elliott,” Jacquette responded. “Isn’t that the funniest thing? They must be the ‘Queen’s Maries’.”

“Oh, do you know that song?” said Mary Elliott. “My mother used to sing me to sleep with it.”

“Pretty sad going to sleep, wasn’t it?” Jacquette asked, with a smile, and hummed a little of the haunting old melody:

Compromise

“ ‘ Yestreen the Queen had four Maries,
The night she’ll hae but three.

.
Oh, little did my mother ken,
The death I was to dee! ’ ”

“ You left out,

“ ‘ There was Mary Seaton, and Mary
Beaton,
And Mary Carmichael, and me.’ ”

And oh, girls!—we *are* Mary B, and Mary
S. and Mary C. and me. I must be ‘ me ’
—M. E.—Mary Elliott.”

“ Sure enough! ” Jacquette answered,
gaily. “ Now, all you girls have to do is
to fly around and catch your Queen.”

But, while the rest laughed, Mary
Elliott surprised her by nestling closer as
they passed into the restaurant, and whis-
pering, with an adoring upward glance,
“ I’ve caught *my* Queen, now.”

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

This was how it happened that Jacquette began to be called the "Queen"—a nickname that clung to her from that day; and, in spite of the fact that she was never seen at spreads, and that she was even absent from the triumphant initiation, a few weeks later, when the "four Maries" were all taken into Sigma Pi at once, the new girls understood that she was identified with the sorority they were joining, and, for some reason—perhaps in the start a fanciful idea of being the "Queen's Maries"—they insisted on choosing her as their sorority "mother."

It was she who furnished them with the thousand and one little hints on high-school dress and manners which were part of the Sigma Pi education of new members, and, in return, all the Maries, with the exception perhaps of Marion Crandall, whose effusive manner never seemed quite real to Jacquette, gave their Queen the confidence of devoted subjects.

Compromise

But, of the four, it was Mary Elliott who came closest. After a little, she fell into the habit of bringing her books, day after day, and studying at the "Palace," as the Queen's modest home was immediately dubbed, and both Mr. Granville and his daughter found themselves growing very fond of the gentle girl, at first because of the love in her eyes whenever she looked at Jacquette, but soon because of her own dear, quiet little self.

CHAPTER XII

THE REAL QUEEN

THE first weeks of Jacquette's sophomore year discouraged her. After Louise and Bobs and Marquis had gone, a blank fell into her days. All around her the Sigma Pi good times were going on, but, though she was allowed to share the secrets whenever the girls remembered to tell them to her, she constantly felt herself just outside the circle of fun. She had too much time to study, and, without the excitement that had urged and hurried her all the year before, she dragged through her lessons listlessly. The zest had gone from everything.

It was not long before Mademoiselle's keen eyes noticed the change, and one day, with a few adroit questions, she learned the facts.

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“But is it a secret, dearie—this inactive membership?” she asked, almost before Jacquette realised that she had mentioned it.

“No, not exactly. It’s all right for you to know, Mademoiselle, but of course we don’t care to have the other sororities making capital of it. They’d tell all the new girls there must be something wrong with Sigma Pi, or my people wouldn’t have wanted me to be inactive.”

“I see,” said Mademoiselle with an understanding shake of the head. “At any rate, I’m glad it’s right for me to know, pet, because it makes me happy. Now, about the lessons, did it ever occur to you, honey, that, after a dear little girl has once fallen into the habit of pinning her garments together, it is very hard for her to feel the necessity of sewing on buttons?”

Jacquette looked puzzled.

“This is what I mean,” Mademoiselle went on, lifting her shoulders ever so little

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

and giving her head a sprightly toss which Jacquette instantly recognised as her own. "I'm a bright little girl! I'm a clever little girl! It isn't necessary for me to spend time on my lessons. Oh, no, I never look up the references! I don't bother with the grammar! My translation is so good that it brings up my marks even if I do fail on those stupid old rules. I'm such a lucky little girl! *I'll get through.*"

"That's pinning one's clothing together to keep it from falling off. Wait, dearie, I haven't done. Won't you try, now that you have more time, to form the habit of sewing the buttons on your lessons?"

No one could resist Mademoiselle when the pleading tone came into her voice, and, from that moment, Jacquette's inactive membership became endurable. She had begun to sew on the buttons; and gradually, as the weeks went on, she won back the old Brookdale sense of satisfaction in making each lesson a finished piece of work

The Real Queen

—a feeling which she had learned to regard as childish during her freshman year at Marston.

“Tia, what makes you look so young?” she demanded, one evening, as she and Aunt Sula finished playing a duet which ended in a series of martial chords. “Is it just that rose-coloured waist? You don’t know what a dear little brown ringlet there is, trickling down in front of this ear.”

“Trickling ringlet! Your English teacher would call that a vicious misuse of the verb,” Aunt Sula laughed as she tucked the ringlet into place. “Perhaps I look different because I’m so happy over your finding time for the music again. I feel as if somebody had given me back my Brookdale girl.”

“Brookdale,” Jacquette repeated, with an odd little smile, as she hunted through a pile of music. “That makes me think of Margaret Howland. She asked me right out, this morning, why I wasn’t go-

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

ing to spreads and things; so I had to tell her in confidence, that I was inactive for this year. Guess what she said."

" "Oh, how I do envy you!" " Aunt Sula hazarded, roguishly.

"No, sir! She said for goodness' sake not to let her mother hear of it, or she'd surely be made to do the same thing."

"Oh! Mrs. Howland has her troubles, then."

"Troubles! If you think Sigma Pi makes troubles, you ought to have a little experience with the Kappa Delts. They've been just over-reaching themselves in their rushing this fall. It's spreads every other minute, and matinees and automobile rides and bunches of violets for their pledges, and everything else you can think of. The worst of it, for Margaret, is that she's the kind of girl that tries to keep up her studies besides, you know, and I can't help seeing, myself, that she's just worn out."

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“Too bad. Don’t you think you might——”

“Coax her to be inactive? Never in the world! You ought to have heard her pity me, this morning! She’s a dandy girl, though. I was thinking, to-day, that if she’d only happened to be a Sigma Pi, she and I would have had such fine times together all through high school. Here’s that duet I was looking for. We haven’t played it for ages. Let’s try it.”

Next morning, when Jacquette reached school she found an unusual buzz of excitement outside the building. Newspapers were fluttering everywhere, and knots of boys and girls were standing about, each group with heads close together over some intensely interesting article that they were reading.

The Sigma Pi girls were gathered near the school entrance, and, as Jacquette came up, Mamie Coolidge thrust a paper under her eyes.

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

“See that,” she ordered, pointing to the tall headlines,

“BOARD OF EDUCATION
SCORES AGAINST
SECRET SOCIETIES”

“They’ve got our injunction set aside, Jack,” Blanche Gross hurried to explain, without waiting for Jacquette to read the rest. “So now they can enforce that horrid rule against secret societies, and they’re going to do it. And do you realise what it means, right here in Sigma Pi? No sorority girl can hold a class office any more. That makes Etta give up the secretaryship of the junior class!”

“And it takes Blanche out of the senior dramatics; that’s worse,” Etta broke in.

“And Flo Burton off the basket-ball team,” Blanche took it up again. “And as for football, the Marston eleven will

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simply go to smash. Nearly every fellow on it is a fraternity man."

"Oh, it will kill this school, that's all!" Mamie Coolidge declared. "It may not make so much difference in schools where there aren't so many secret societies, and of course we'll get another injunction very soon, but, in the meantime, Marston High will suffer more than we will, that's one sure thing."

"That's the tardy bell, girls!" cried somebody, just then, and, before Jacquette could learn any more, the newspaper was furled and they all went hurrying to their places.

As she reached her desk she noticed Mary Elliott looking at her with swollen eyes, from across the aisle. A minute later Mary reached over and laid a scrap of paper on Jacquette's desk. On it was scrawled the two lines:

"Yestreen the Queen had four Maries,
The night she'll hae but three."

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

“What do you mean?” Jacquette scribbled beneath the words, and handed the paper back, but instead of answering, Mary put her handkerchief to her eyes and began to cry.

Jacquette watched her in bewilderment. Had she offended her without knowing it?

Then the soft, penetrating voice of Mademoiselle, calling her name from the roll, brought her back to duty, and she faced about with a start.

As soon as the noon hour came, Jacquette followed Mary into the hall.

“What is it, Mary? What do you mean?” she asked.

“Haven’t you seen the morning paper?”

“Why, yes, but——”

“Oh, it’s different with you! Your family understands. But you ought to have seen how angry my father was when he read that article.”

The Real Queen

“Angry? At the Board, do you mean?”

“Oh, no! It was the first he had ever heard about the secret societies getting that injunction against the Board, and he said it was an unheard-of piece of insolence, and that he should think every boy and girl connected with it would have been expelled, and that he felt disgraced to see me wearing this pin and he wasn’t going to have a daughter of his belonging to an organisation that was in antagonism to the school authorities, and——”

“But, Mary, didn’t you tell him there was no such thing as resigning from Sigma Pi?”

“Oh, I did!” Mary had shrunk back into a dark corner of the hall where she could mop her eyes without being noticed. “I told him I’d have to be expelled from the sorority and that would disgrace me before the whole school, and everything else, but nothing made any difference. He

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

says the disgrace is in belonging to such a society. He's given me three days to make up my mind to leave Sigma Pi of my own accord and if I haven't done it then, I think he's going to make me. Oh, Jacquette!" Mary began to sob again. "I haven't any mother, you know. There's just a housekeeper."

"You poor little thing!" said Jacquette, drawing Mary's arm through hers protectingly. "Here, take my handkerchief. Yours is soaking wet. There! Now, come out in the air, and eat some luncheon. I'm thinking of something that I believe will comfort you, but I can't tell you about it just yet. I wouldn't say much to the other girls, until you've heard my plan. Just stop worrying until tomorrow, can't you, please? You must, you know, if the Queen says so."

"Oh, but I can't bear being expelled and having the girls not like me! Jacquette, will you have to turn against me?"

The Real Queen

Will I have to give up being one of the Queen's Maries? "

"I should say not!" Jacquette declared, with a sudden sense of shame as she recognised her own old fears in Mary's panic. "You leave the whole thing to me."

"Oh, you don't know my father!" Mary protested, but she dried her tears and smiled, in spite of herself, as she followed the Queen into the bracing October air.

"I hope to have that honour, some day," Jacquette answered, roguishly. She felt very motherly and tender toward this timid girl who seemed so easily influenced by her. "In the meantime, I'm going to take his daughter and get her something to eat. Where's Marion Crandall, today? "

"I don't know. She didn't come to school."

"Etta!" Jacquette called, just then, as she and Mary overtook a buzzing group of

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

Sigma Pi girls, gathered under a tree. "Let me see that paper, won't you? I didn't get a chance to read it before school."

"This is the afternoon paper. There's something worse yet, now. Isn't that perfectly shameful?" Etta answered excitedly, pointing to a column which was headed,

"SIGMA PI EPSILON SORORITY IN DISGRACE."

"Mercy!" Jacquette gasped. "What's this?"

Her eyes ran hurriedly through the sensational account of a deception which had been practised at Marston High School by two members of the Sigma Pi Epsilon sorority.

For the sake of getting into a sorority that she considered desirable, the article

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said, a certain girl who lived outside of the district had given as her own the address of one of the members of the Marston chapter of Sigma Pi Epsilon, and, by doing so, had been admitted to the school. The names of both girls were suppressed, but it was stated that the one who had allowed her address to be used had been suspended, and the other expelled, from school.

“And of course there’s not one word of truth in it all!” Jacquette exclaimed.

“I wish there weren’t,” said Etta, gloomily.

“What do you mean?”

“I mean that Marion Crandall is the girl that gave Bessie Bartlett’s address for hers so that she could come to Marston—and Bess let her do it, too.”

“One of my Maries! And never told me! You didn’t know it, did you, Mary?” Jacquette asked, turning to the girl at her side.

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"I didn't, Jacquette," put in Mary Barnes.

"Nor I, either. It's a perfect shock to me," said Marie Stanwood.

But Jacquette was watching Mary Elliott.

"Yes, I did," Mary owned, miserable in her honesty. "But it was before I knew you, and Marion made me promise never to tell. She said it was no harm; it was just a technical rule that kept her from coming to Marston because she lived a block too far in a certain direction."

"I knew it, too. I heard Marion ask Bess if she could borrow her address," put in Mamie Coolidge, avoiding Jacquette's eyes, but determined not to let little Mary Elliott take the blame alone. "It didn't seem wrong to me, at the time, either. It looks different, now. Marion said her father knew she was going to do it, and he just laughed and thought it was cute. But of course I never dreamed she was going

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to sign her mother's name to her report card, and then tell those awful yarns to Mr. Branch."

Jacquette's eyes looked black instead of hazel, and she was every inch the "Queen" as the girls fell into a semi-circle before her and obediently answered her questions.

"Why, you see," Blanche Gross took up the story, "Marion cut a lot of her classes the first few weeks after she was initiated Sigma Pi. I suppose the sorority importance went to her head a little, the way it does, sometimes, you know, and at the end of the month her report was so bad that she got worried about it and signed her mother's name to it instead of taking it home. But her room-teacher suspected the signature, and Mr. Branch wrote a letter to Marion's mother at the address she had given, and it was Bessie's house, of course, and she and Marion got the letter from the postman, and tore it up, and then Mr. Branch called them to the office,

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and questioned them, and they got all muddled up, and——”

“Do you mean they didn’t tell the truth?” Jacquette demanded.

“Well, you know how Bess is, Jacquette. She never had a bad intention in her life, and she thought she was doing the whole thing for the sake of Sigma Pi, don’t you see? Marion was her Sigma Pi sister, and in trouble, and she felt that she just had to answer Mr. Branch in the way that would help Marion out. But he saw right through the story and now she’s suspended for a month and Marion Crandall is expelled and Sigma Pi is disgraced, and the Kappa Delts will just be in clover!”

“Oh, it’s awful!” Jacquette exclaimed. “It makes me wish——” She stopped short, and closed her lips. “Come, Mary,” she said, gently. “I don’t blame you. You made a mistake, and we all do that. I want you to eat something before the bell rings. The rest of you girls had

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better do the same, too," she added over her shoulder as she drew Mary along. "We can't live on excitement."

From that moment until she hurried away from school in the afternoon, carefully avoiding the possibility of meeting any of the girls, a busy undercurrent of thinking was going on in Jacquette's mind. To her disappointment, when she reached the house, she found it deserted, but the first thing she did was to get the morning paper and read all about the action of the Board of Education. Then, after walking back and forth through the empty rooms, and standing at the window, looking impatiently down the street, she turned with a sudden impulse and going to the telephone, called Flo Burton.

Ever since their memorable interview with Mr. Pierce in the principal's room, Jacquette had been finding out good qualities in this harum-scarum girl, and she turned to her now in the hope of sym-

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pathy. Flo had been missing from the council of Sigma Pi sisters at noon and, remembering that Flo's classes were arranged, this year, so that she went home before luncheon, Jacquette thought there might be a chance of finding her there now, though she knew that most of the girls had probably flocked to the sorority rooms to talk things over.

Flo answered the telephone, and Jacquette plunged into her subject with the first words.

"I want to talk with you," she said. "Do you realise that we're in disgrace with the school authorities?"

"You mean on account of Marion and Bess?"

"Of course, that; but I was thinking, just now, about what the Board has done. Seems to me all fraternities and sororities are in disgrace from now on, with this rule in force, shutting us out from all the school honours and privileges."

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“But—Jacquette Willard!” came in a scandalised tone. “Surely you can’t mean you’d turn traitor to Sigma Pi for the sake of holding a class office?”

“Turn traitor—no! I’m not thinking about offices. But you know, yourself, that the boys are planning to collect more money and fight the Board again, and doesn’t it seem to you, Flo, that it’s a question, now, of deciding between our sorority and our school?”

“But, Jack,” Flo answered, with tears in her voice. “Surely you’ll *decide right!*”

There was something so childishly one-sided in this appeal that Jacquette smiled, and, as she did so, she realised for the first time that she herself had almost outgrown Flo’s tragic view. But she understood that view too well to make the mistake of laughing at it.

“Aren’t there two sides, Florrie?” she coaxed. “Oughtn’t we to have a little of

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the same feeling toward Marston that college students have when they talk about their 'Alma Mater'?"

"*We* aren't hurting Marston!" came the retort. "It's that horrid old Board that has spoiled the foot-ball team—and everything! It's just a case of persecution."

"Oh, Flo! Why, I don't see what else the Board could do, if it wanted to discourage secret societies. It can't forbid our joining them, you see, if our fathers and mothers let us, but perhaps it can manage to make them unpopular, by this rule."

"Make itself unpopular, I guess you mean."

"See here, Flo," Jacquette asked, abruptly. "I want you to tell me something. If I should decide to give up Sigma Pi, would it break our friendship?"

"What a question! It would have to, of course. Do you suppose, if it really

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came to choosing between Sigma Pi and you, it would take me a minute to decide? But you'll never do such a thing. You're teasing me."

"No, I'm not teasing," Jacquette said, in a disappointed voice, and, after a few minutes more of fruitless discussion, she hung up the receiver, and sat thinking.

"Miss Jacquette," said Mollie, the maid, putting her head in at the door, "the woman that sews for your auntie is here, and wants to speak to someone."

"Bring her into the library, Mollie," Jacquette answered, and, with her thoughts still on the talk with Flo, she listened to the dressmaker's errand, and asked her to be seated until Miss Granville should come in.

"Glad to do it, I'm sure," Mrs. Waller agreed, as she put back the floating brown veil which covered her shabby turban, and settled herself comfortably. "I'm glad of the rest. I've walked about fifteen blocks

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to see your aunt, and now she's not here. Just home from school, aren't you, my dear? Go to Marston? Say, there's plenty of excitement over there to-day, I guess. One of those sororities got into print, didn't it? Well, I think they're a dreadful bad thing for girls, anyhow."

"What's that?" Jacquette's wandering attention was fixed in an instant. "I'm a sorority girl myself, Mrs. Waller," she added rather coldly.

"You don't say! Well, now, I didn't suppose your aunt would hear of such a thing. She's so sensible, as a general rule! But, of course, they're not all off one piece, and yours may be better than most. This one that's in disgrace, now, is about the worst, from what I hear. I sew for one of the teachers over there, and that's how I come to know so much about it. She's good friends with the principal, herself, so she gets things straight, and she tells me those Sigma something girls—

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whatever it is—had a pretty bad name with the faculty before this thing happened. They toss their heads at rules, and all that, you know.”

“But that isn’t true, Mrs. Waller,” Jacquette protested, her Sigma Pi spirit bristling like a porcupine. “I’d like to know which teacher made that remark. The Sigma Pi girls are as nice a set as there is in school. Any sorority is liable to make a mistake and take in the wrong kind of a member, once in a while, and then trouble may come of it, of course, but that’s no reason to think the rest are all bad!”

“Well, there, now, my dear, don’t get excited! I really couldn’t mention the name of the teacher that told me. ’Twouldn’t be right. But she knows the facts. I didn’t dream you had friends among those girls. It’s real too bad for them, isn’t it? I mean the nice ones—that is, if there are any nice ones, as you say.

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For of course 'Poor Tray is known by the company he keeps,' don't you know?"

The postman's ring at the door just then gave Jacquette an excuse to get away without answering, and she walked out into the hall, startled by the tumult of indignation which Mrs. Waller's words had roused within her. "That's the way it would always be if I should give up Sigma Pi," she thought to herself. "At school, they would think I was queer, and, outside of school, people would just shake their heads and say what a wicked set those sorority girls must be—because Jacquette Willard had to cut loose from them! Nobody would ever understand."

"It's a letter for you, Miss; that's all he brought," said Mollie, turning back from the door which she had opened, and, as Jacquette took the envelope, she recognised the big, honest handwriting of Bobs Drake.

For a minute, sorority troubles were for-

The Real Queen

gotten, and a pleased smile replaced the worried look, while Jacquette, dropping down on the hall bench, opened her letter and began to read. The first few pages were full of college news and nonsense, and the dimples played in her cheeks. Then the tone changed.

“Jack, I hope you won’t think I’m turning preacher,” Bobs wrote, “but there’s something on my chest that I wanted to say before I came away, and I didn’t have the sand. It’s about the way you fell down on that sorority resolution.” (Jacquette’s eyebrows lifted.) “I say ‘fell down’ because inactive membership isn’t the same as what you planned to do, by a long sight. And here’s the point: If it isn’t good for you to be an active member of a sorority, why is it good for other girls? Your health isn’t so much more delicate—you don’t require so much more time for your lessons—than the gen-

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eral run of girls. Of course they can't all be inactive, as you are now, and escape the bad effects of the thing, that way, and yet, by wearing your pin and keeping your position more or less of a secret, you're all the time influencing other girls to get into the very things that you made up your mind it was best for you to get out of. What you write about the four Maries, for instance, especially that little one you like so much, makes it plain that you have a great influence with some of the girls.

"I would have said all this before I left, only I didn't like to disturb you when you were so happy about the arrangement you had made with the girls. But I have a teacher, here—the finest man I ever knew—and talking with him about some other things to-night, got me to feeling that I was a coward unless I gave you straight goods on this. The fact is, Jack, things that seemed mighty important in high school begin to dwindle when you get to

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college, especially if you have the luck to know a man like Prescott. I'll tell you more about him when I see you.

“Always the same old

“Bobs.”

“P. S.—I had a letter from Clarence Mullen, to-day, the second since I've been here. You'd be surprised to read it. That military school is a fine thing for him.

“R. S. D.”

Jacquette's hands, with the letter in them, fell into her lap. Things were happening strangely to-day.

“What—going, Mrs. Waller?” she said, with a start, as the dressmaker appeared in the hall, buttoning her coat about her.

“Yes, my dear. I'm rested, now, and it may be a long time before your aunt comes in. I think I'll just run along and 'phone her this evening.”

As Mrs. Waller went down the steps,

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old Mr. Granville came up, supporting himself with his cane.

“Now, Grandpa Granville!” Jacquette reproached him lovingly, as she drew him to his easy chair, and sat down on a stool at his side. “Didn’t you say I was your gold-headed cane, and that you couldn’t take walks without me? What made you go before I got home?”

He smiled at her tenderly. “It wasn’t fair,” he admitted, brushing back her soft, bright hair. “And this ivory-headed cane doesn’t compare with the gold one either. But I was restless, my dear—I was restless. Sula had to go out, and I got to worrying.”

“I know why,” Jacquette murmured, laying her cheek against his shoulder. “You were bothered by those articles about Sigma Pi in the paper to-day.”

“You’ve seen them, then?”

“Yes, indeed! It’s the only topic there is, over at school. Did Tia feel bad?”

The Real Queen

He nodded. Then he asked solemnly, "Was it true, dear, that any of our sorosis did those dishonest things?"

"Our sorosis!" Oh, grandpa, you darling!" Jacquette exclaimed, between laughing and tears. "Who cares if you do call it sorosis, as long as you say 'our,' that way! Yes, it was true, but it isn't quite so bad as it looks in the paper. You see in the first place we made a mistake when we initiated Marion Crandall. We didn't take time to know her well enough. We were too anxious to get more new members than the Kappa Delts—that was the trouble. But she's expelled from Mars-ton, so she's out of Sigma Pi, and as for Bess Bartlett, she just didn't realise that she was doing anything wrong, at all. I know how she is. She's a nice girl, but thoughtless."

Mr. Granville sighed, without answering.

"Here's a letter from Bobs Drake,"

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Jacquette went on with determined cheerfulness. "I want you to hear something he says." And she read aloud what Bobs had written about her inactive membership.

As she finished, her grandfather lifted his white head and looked her straight in the eyes. "Well?" he asked.

"Well," she answered, steadily, "I was trying to keep it to tell Tia first, but you're so blue, I think she'd want me to——"

"Here they are, girls," a bright voice cried, just then, and Aunt Sula, still in her outdoor wraps, walked into the library followed by Mary Barnes and Marie Stanwood and Mary Elliott. "I found three forlorn girls outside, Jacquette, trying to make up their minds whether they should come in or not, so I brought them with me."

"I was afraid you wouldn't want to see us, because you didn't wait for me to walk

The Real Queen

home with you," Mary Elliott explained, crossing the room to Jacquette.

"Of course I want to see you," Jacquette answered, slipping one arm around her. "Don't I always want to see my Maries? Sit down, girls," she added, as Aunt Sula, motioning them to chairs, took one herself.

But the girls glanced at Mr. Granville and his daughter. "It's about Sigma Pi," Marie Stanwood hinted mysteriously.

"Talk it right out before Grandpa and Aunt Sula," said Mary Elliott, with unusual decision, and she glanced lovingly from one to the other of the relatives she had adopted in the speech. "It's all about me, and I want to know what they think."

So, while Jacquette stood by her grandfather's chair, with one arm round Mary's waist, Marie Stanwood told them of Mr. Elliott's stern decree, and went on to present the reasons why it was too much to expect that Mary should obey him.

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

“We’ve been to Miss Billings—my Latin teacher,” she said, “and she thinks no father would ask such a thing of his daughter if he knew what it meant. She belongs to a college sorority herself, but she’s fair to both sides. She says a high school sorority probably does sway a girl away from study toward—society, and if she had a daughter, she’d try to keep her out of such things until she went to college, but she thinks the getting out, after you’re once in, is a different matter. A girl that would turn against her sorority—this is just what she said—would be despised and boycotted by the whole school, as much by the non-fraternity and non-sorority crowds as by the others. And we girls think, Jacquette,” she concluded, “that you can talk the best of any of us, and that if you’d just go to Mary’s father and tell him how things are at Marston, he’d feel differently. What do you say?”

Jacquette’s hand stole down into her

The Real Queen

grandfather's, and she drew Mary closer. Then she spoke, with a sweet, womanly ring in her voice.

“ I'm glad you came, girls. I was just going to tell my grandfather something that I'd like to say before all of you. I've made up my mind that the Board is right—that we'd all be better off without sororities, and I don't think I ought to hide that belief behind inactive membership another day. To-morrow I'm going to tell the girls, and give up my place in Sigma Pi, once for all. Mary, will you be afraid to come—with me? ” she asked, smiling down into the upturned face which had suddenly grown luminous.

“ Now, Tia, don't you look sorry this time, when you want to be glad! ” she went on, turning to Aunt Sula. “ It isn't tragic the way it was before. Then, I was doing it because you thought it was right, but now I know it's right myself, and I'm happy about it, too. Why, even if the

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

girls decide that they'll have to 'dishonourably expel' Mary and me, I guess we can stand it, as long as we know we're doing right!"

"Bravo!" cried old Mr. Granville, bringing his cane down on the floor, while Jacquette, with a shining face, caught Aunt Sula in her arms for a hug and then turned to the bewildered girls, with both hands outstretched.

"Don't think I'm breaking the vows easily," she said, reading the doubt in their faces. "I'm not, girls. It's only because a 'bad promise is better broken than kept!' And, even if you can't follow your Queen in this, I know you'll never make Mary and me feel like outcasts when we see you at Marston High."

"Outcasts!" ejaculated quiet Mary Barnes, opening her lips for the first time during the interview, and speaking up stoutly. "Why, Jacquette Willard, you're the splndidest girl I ever saw in my life!

The Real Queen

Marie, I don't know how you feel, but I'm going to follow the Queen!"

A little later, as three loyal Maries started down the steps together, Mary Elliott lingered to throw her arms around Jacquette's neck and whisper happily,

"Remember what I wrote you this morning: 'The night she'll hae but three'? I thought I was going to be the one left out, and there it was poor Marion Crandall, all the time!"

CHAPTER XIII

CHRISTMAS

ISN'T it pretty, Tia?" Jacquette demanded with just as fresh and eager a note as if she had not asked the question a hundred times before.

"The prettiest one I ever saw," Aunt Sula agreed, entirely forgetting that she had ever answered it until that minute.

"Very handsome, very handsome," Mr. Granville pronounced. Then, leaving the enthusiastic couple in the doorway, he walked toward the glittering Christmas tree which loomed at the other end of the brightly lighted room. "What's this queer-shaped bundle down here under the branches, girls?" he asked, touching it with his cane.

"Grandpa Granville, you're as bad as a

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little boy!" Jacquette cried out, darting forward and drawing him away. "What right have you to pry into that package, I'd like to know, sir?"

"Oh, ho!" he laughed guiltily, casting a furtive backward glance. "We might open that one, now, Jacquette, and have it over with."

"No, indeed! Not till everyone is here. The very idea!" she exclaimed. "You must come right in the other room, and draw the curtains. That's the only way to keep you out of mischief. Doesn't Tia look beautiful in that creamy gown, Grandpa? Isn't her dark hair lovely with it, and don't you think it's pretty, waved that way? I'm the hair-dresser."

Mr. Granville's eyes rested first on his smiling daughter, then on the tall girl at her side, whose snowy muslin gown was scarcely whiter than the pretty neck and arms it bared. Around Jacquette's throat was a necklace of pearls which had be-

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

longed to her mother, and, though she wore no other ornament, she seemed aglow with colour, for her lips were scarlet, her cheeks were roses, her eyes had the sparkle of jewels and her beautiful hair glittered like gold under sunlight.

"I'm very proud of you both," he said, pausing in the doorway to attempt a gallant bow, but, before it was half done, a pair of soft arms caught him round the neck.

"That's what you get for standing under the mistletoe," Jacquette explained as she let him go. "You'd better be more cautious after the girls get here, grandpa!"

"I'd like to know how anyone's going to help getting under it in this house, tonight," he answered, pretending to look injured, as he glanced up at the wreaths and festoons of green overhead. "It looks innocent enough—all that holly and red Christmas bells dangling around—but the

Christmas

mistletoe's tucked in everywhere, I suspect. It's a trap. I'm going to warn Bobs about it, the minute he gets here."

"Warn Bobs, indeed!" Jacquette repeated, laughing back into his face. "You must remember, grandpa, that Bobs is terribly grown up, this vacation. And I'm a senior, too. You'd better be careful how you joke." Then she added, irrelevantly, "I've just had an awful thought. What if we've invited more people than we'll have room for?"

"No danger, child. Don't you worry. Your grandmother always said our house was elastic when it came to taking in friends, and I rather think Sula's inherited the knack of making it stretch."

"It isn't as if they were going to stay all night," said Aunt Sula, with a smile. "Father, do you remember the winter we lived in the little brown house, how Mac had to sleep on the hall couch so often that he threatened to put up a sign, 'Mal-

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

colm's Guest-room,' over his bedroom door? "

"Do I?" Mr. Granville laughed softly. "We gave house-parties in those days, only we didn't call them that, did we?"

"But aren't times changed?" Jacquette put in, greatly amused. "Think of Uncle Mac now, giving up his splendid room and sleeping on a hall couch! Or imagine Quis doing it. Aunt Fanny would hold up her hands in horror at the thought."

"I've seen times since we came to Channing when I thought it might do Quis good to give up a few things," said the old gentleman, thoughtfully, "but I guess the boy's coming out all right, in spite of the money. As for Malcolm, it hasn't hurt him a bit. He's the same good boy at heart that he always was."

"Speaking of angels, there he is, now!" Jacquette exclaimed. "No, it isn't Uncle Mac, either," she added as she flung the front door wide open and peered out into

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the snowy night. "It's someone in a closed carriage. Why, Tia, it's Mrs. Howland! Would she come away and leave Margaret? Probably Margaret made her do it, but she told me yesterday that the worst thing typhoid fever had done to her, next to putting off her graduation, was keeping her away from our Christmas party. Why, look! Who's that? Who *is* it?"

"It's a Christmas surprise for you," said Aunt Sula as Mrs. Howland led a much-bundled little figure into the hall.

"It's Margaret! It's Margaret! Oh, how beautiful!" Jacquette cried, on tip-toe with joy as she tried to unwind the veils and shawls that Margaret's anxious mother had wrapped her in. "I never dreamed the doctor would let you come out at night. I didn't think you were strong enough, yet. O-o-oh, Margaret!" she broke off, as she actually found her friend at last, inside all the muffling. "You look

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

like a doll! Your eyes are so big—and that short curly hair—you darling! Oh, why can't we all look as sweet as that, and go to parties in pink wrappers!"

"There! Let her go," Aunt Sula interposed. They were all laughing, but the tears were near the surface, for each one was remembering that Margaret had been close to the gate of death in the long hard weeks just past. "We'll put her in this easy-chair and have her mother stand guard over her. The doctor said we might keep her for an hour or two if we'd be very careful of her."

"Will he mind my hugging her every few minutes?" Jacquette asked, anxiously. "I'm so glad—so glad you're here, Margaret!" she whispered, making sure of one more hug, on the instant. "The evening couldn't have been perfect without you."

There was no need for Margaret to answer in words, even if she could have found

Christmas

a chance. Her happiness was shining in her face, while her mother and Aunt Sula and Jacquette, generaled by old Mr. Granville, all bustled about, lining the deep chair with pillows, and tucking the little convalescent in among them. When she was seated, they spread a thick, fleecy white shawl over her knees, like a laprobe.

“There! But we won’t cover up her pretty pink slippers,” Jacquette declared, slipping a hassock under Margaret’s feet. “At least we must let the toes peep out—so!—or I know she won’t have a bit good time!”

“Jack, you tease!” Margaret protested, but she gave a contented little ripple of laughter as she leaned back among the pillows. “Hark!” she added. “Isn’t that your Uncle Mac’s voice?”

Jacquette flew out into the hall to see, and, from that minute the bell kept ringing, until the rooms were filled with happy, laughing, chattering people. The atmos-

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

phere seemed charged with secrets and surprises that were in danger of going off at any instant, and Jacquette's eyes grew bigger and brighter and darker with every guest she greeted.

At last a peculiar series of rings brought her dancing downstairs from the room where she had just left a bevy of girls, removing their wraps.

"That's Quis! I know his ring!" she cried, as she came. "I must be there to open the door this time, Mollie."

But, when she had opened it, she saw, instead of Quis, a vision in a long, pale blue party cloak, and, after one astonished look at its laughing eyes and rosy red cheeks, she opened both arms with a cry of delight.

"Louise Markham! Oh, joy! Uncle Mac said your train was ice-bound, and you might not get in before morning."

"So it was, but we made up time, and wired again later," Louise explained mer-

Christmas

rily, as she emerged from Jacquette's embrace. "Your uncle was bound to make a Christmas surprise of us, that's all!"

"Us? We? Of course! Quis was on the same train with you. Where's he?"

"Freezing in a dark corner until you remember to ask for me," was the prompt response, and a tall figure stepped into the light of the doorway.

"Oh, Quis—Quis! Goody! Ask for you! Didn't I fly to the door because I knew your ring? Never mind that snow on your feet. Come in!" she cried, drawing them both into the bright warm house. "Uncle Mac, you sinner!" she added in the next breath, as he came out into the hall, his big face beaming. "You made me think they couldn't get here, but I'll forgive you, now! Tia, here's this darling Louise, after all, and only look at our splendid Quis! You never can reach up to kiss him! Come Louise—a lot of the girls are upstairs!"

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The white dress and blue cloak disappeared up the stairway together, and the lively sounds that floated down a minute later faintly suggested the reception that was going on above. Blanche and Etta and Mamie and Flo had all rushed at Louise together, while Jacquette hovered round the edges, too happy for words.

While the exclaiming and the hugging were still at their height, something called her away, and a little later, she appeared on the threshold of the room just long enough to say, "I'll have to go down, girls. Come whenever you're ready, please."

"Sh!" Blanche Gross was whispering to Louise, as Jacquette turned away. "She's so excited, she hasn't noticed, yet. Don't say a word until she does. We planned it for a Christmas surprise."

At the foot of the stairs Jacquette came suddenly on the three Maries, trying to



*At last a peculiar series of rings brought her
dancing downstairs*

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conceal a bulky hatbox, as they caught sight of her.

“What’s that, girls? Shan’t I take it?” she inquired, with gleeful innocence.

“No, thank you!” Marie Stanwood answered, emphatically, thrusting the box behind her. “Where’s your Aunt Sula?”

“Oh! A thousand pardons!” Jacqueline apologised, with a mischievous laugh. “Tia, you’re needed here.”

Then on she went in search of Quis, beckoning him, as soon as she caught his eye, to follow her into the empty dining-room.

“Quis,” she began, breathlessly, as soon as they were alone together, “there’s one thing I’m nervous about, to-night, because I don’t know how you’ll take it. Please promise that you’ll be all right before I tell you. Please!”

“How could I help it, fairy princess?” he answered, smiling, and, as he spoke, his thoughts and hers flew back to the night

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

when he had met his Brookdale cousin at the train, more than three years before.

“I’ll promise anything you say.”

“Oh, thank you! It’s—well, you know little Mary Elliott—the girl I like so much? She and her father moved here last fall, and only lately I’ve found out the most surprising thing! Clarence Mullen is some sort of a cousin of hers.”

“Well? ”

“Well—this,” she hurried on. “Clarence’s father and mother are abroad this year and he’s spending the holidays with Mary and her father, and I just had to invite him to-night, and, really, Quis, you don’t know how that boy has improved. He stands up as straight in his uniform, and it’s just as becoming, and he acts so gentlemanly! If you only could forgive him, and be nice to him——”

Marquis’s laugh interrupted right there. “Forgive!” he echoed. “Do you s’pose I’m holding that baby grudge all this

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time? Not much! Besides, I always knew, in my heart, that Daddy Branch was right in putting the blame for that thing on us older fellows. Of course I'll be nice to him! By the way, Jack, has Bobs come?" he broke off, cutting her thanks short with the question.

"No, not yet."

"Not yet! Won't he be here this evening?"

"Oh, yes, of course! You meant had he come to town? He came yesterday. He's been here nearly all day, helping me trim the tree."

"Oh, ho! Telephoned you from the station, I suppose, as soon as his train struck Channing?"

"How did you know?" she demanded, and then the colour flew to her face, as Marquis laughed delightedly.

"But you're on the wrong track, Quis," she added, recovering herself in a flash. "Just wait till you see who's coming here

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

with him to-night, if you want to know the one he really likes."

"Pooh! Who is it?" he asked, his laugh subsiding into an incredulous grin.

"Oh, the blindness of some people! Why, he always admired her at Marston, and they've been corresponding regularly ever since he went to Tech. She thinks the world of him; she told me so."

Marquis was honestly curious by this time. "Not Bess Bartlett?"

"And why not? You needn't speak in that disgusted tone. Bess has changed since you saw her. That trouble she got into just brought her to her senses, Quis. You know she was always bright enough, only she didn't care, and when she found herself suspended that time, things looked serious for the first time in her life. You ought to see the good work she's been doing this year. We call her 'teacher's pet' nowadays!"

"Bess Bartlett teacher's pet! Say, what

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is this occasion, to-night, Jack? A round-up of black sheep? Clarence Mullen and Bess Bartlett! And I suppose Bess's reform has all come since she broke loose from the iniquitous sorority?"

"Don't tease about that, Quis—you mustn't! It was no joke for Bess to take off her pin. I s'pose you think 'twas just foolish?" There was a pleading note in Jacquette's voice, and Marquis met it seriously.

"N—no; perhaps not, Jack. I've modified my ideas about that. Of course I think fraternities are all right, but—well, it may turn out that sororities aren't the best thing in the world for girls. There, now, calm yourself! Don't you begin to argue that!"

"But it's so unreasonable! I tell you, Quis——"

"Tell me not in mournful numbers! I tell you it's Christmas Eve. Say, what do you think of Louise? Stunning?"

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

“ Beautiful as ever. Have you just discovered her? ”

He shrugged his shoulders and tried to look unconcerned.

“ I’ve discovered that Bobs Drake has less discrimination than I gave him credit for. Bess Bartlett! ”

The smiles broke out on Jacquette’s face again.

“ Don’t you worry about Bobs! ” she said. “ You’ll see that he’s going to bring the belle of the evening here, tonight. Come on, Quis, we mustn’t stay out here, alone. ”

There was a mystified look on Marquis’s face as he followed Jacquette back into the jolly crowd, and just at that moment he heard the shout, “ Bobs! Here’s Bobs, at last! ”

Everybody tried to get into the hall at once, while Bobs lingered at the door to brush the snow from the slight figure at his side, and Marquis, following the others,

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drew himself to his full height and peered over the heads and shoulders, trying to discover who it really was that had come with Bobs. When at last he did catch a glimpse, a pleased smile broke over his face, and, seeing a chance at another doorway he managed to slip through to where Jacqueline was already welcoming her guests.

“Mademoiselle! This is fine!” he exclaimed, in honest pleasure. “I didn’t know you were coming! And Bobs, old fellow, how are you? Isn’t it great to be home?” Then—under his breath to Jacqueline, “I’ll get even with you, young lady before the mistletoe’s down! Bess Bartlett, indeed!”

“But look up at them, dearie!” Mademoiselle was saying to Jacqueline, in mimic awe. “Isn’t it wonderful how big and beautiful they grow in just a few years at college?”

“Not so beautiful as they grow at Marston in the same length of time,” Bobs

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

answered her gallantly, but Mademoiselle, following his unconscious glance, gave a teasing smile, as she whispered,

“Quite right, lambkin. A non-sorority high-school course is a great beautifier.”

“Oh, Mademoiselle, at your old tricks!” he laughed back. “Always knowing more than you’ve been told!”

“Now, then! Now, then, Bobs and Marquis!” came Uncle Mac’s big voice from the parlour doorway. “No more time for falling on each other’s necks. As soon as Mademoiselle is ready, you’re to follow me into this room. There’s important business to transact.”

Margaret Howland, in the great easy chair, had already been moved into the room where the Christmas tree was waiting, and in a few minutes more the rest of the party had gathered there. It seemed to old Mr. Granville, as he sat in his comfortable corner near Margaret and

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watched Jacquette flitting about, seating the right ones together and making everyone comfortable and happy, that somebody else besides her Aunt Sula had inherited the knack of making a small place elastic. Nor were his the only pair of eyes that followed the gracious little hostess admiringly, for, while he was thinking it, practical Aunt Fanny was whispering to her husband's sister,

“Sula, I may as well acknowledge that you knew what you were doing. Giving up her sorority hasn't cost her one friend worth having, and she certainly is a picture of health. Besides, Malcolm heard something about her last night——”

“Ladies and gentlemen! Attention, please!” Uncle Mac's jolly voice broke in just then. The distribution of gifts from the great, sparkling, glowing Christmas tree had begun, and the first one to be presented was a long, narrow package, labelled,

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

“Merry Christmas to the best grandfather in the world! Another gold-headed cane, to be used when I’m at school.

“Jacquette.”

“Another?” Marquis questioned, as he read the tag aloud. “I didn’t know you had the first one, Grandpa.”

But, though Jacquette’s loving eyes found her grandfather’s, and they two understood, there was no chance to explain to anyone else in the midst of the happy hubbub that was waxing louder with every minute.

Uncle Mac, as master of ceremonies, was making a new hit with each new presentation speech, and he kept Jacquette and Marquis so busy delivering presents to the others that Quis soon turned and asked Clarence Mullen to come and help them, winning a quick little glance of thankfulness from Jacquette as he did so.

There were no great sums of money rep-

Christmas

resented in the surprises on that tree, but there never was more Christmas fun tied up in packages. For a steady hour the room was ringing with laughter, and, all the time, nobody seemed to care in the least that scarcely any two in the crowd knew what the next two were laughing about.

At the same time, behind the curtain of the noise, there were tender, quiet moments when eyes looked into eyes, and two people were glad that no one else knew. One of these was when Tia opened the locket Jacqueline had given her, and saw her girl's face laughing out; another was when Jacqueline drew back into the shadow of the great tree to look at the little package which Uncle Mac had slipped into her hand.

It was labelled, "Your mother's own girl," and the tears sprang to her eyes when she found a beautiful miniature of her own mother at seventeen.

Uncle Mac heard the little cry she gave,

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

and, looking over her shoulder, whispered, "It was made from a picture I've had ever since I was a boy. You're very like her, my dear—very like."

Jacquette went farther into the shadow, after that, and Uncle Mac understood. Bobs found her there, presently, wiping her eyes, and, for explanation, she laid the miniature in his hand.

"It's you," he said. "No, not you, either."

"My mother, Bobs," she told him, and after that they looked at the picture together, without a word.

Jacquette spoke first. "I'm going to put it away here," she said, turning to a cabinet that stood in the corner. "I'll show it to Tia after everyone has gone." Then, as she closed the little drawer on the precious keepsake, a sense of her duty as hostess brought back the smile to her face.

"Just peep through these branches, Bobs," she said. "See what a pretty pic-

Christmas

ture it makes. How Mary Elliott hovers over Margaret's chair! She's always trying to do something for somebody. And isn't Margaret like a wax doll in that pink gown? Poor girl! Wasn't it hard she had to break down again? When she had that dreadful illness last winter, and had to go away, she set her heart on finishing in February this year, and then along came typhoid fever, and spoiled that, too."

"Was it too much sorority, Jack?" Bobs asked, confidentially.

"I'm afraid so. But I tell Margaret there's one compensation; she and I can be graduated together next June. Oh, Bobs, look at Louise and Quis over there by the door! They've forgotten that there's anyone else on earth. He seems to appreciate her more than ever, Bobs."

"That's right," Bobs agreed. "It's been mighty handy for him, having her right over at Wells College while he was at Cornell. That would go a long way

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

toward keeping a fellow from being homesick."

"Don't you wish you were at Cornell?" she said.

Bobs looked down at her for a minute, with the old smile. Then he answered slowly, shaking his head. "Boston and the United States mails are good enough for me."

"Oh, dear! I fished for that and now I've caught it I don't know what to do with it!" she exclaimed, trying to laugh away the queer little flutter that Bobs's words had thrown her into. "Don't stay behind that tree any longer," she added archly, over her shoulder, "you'll be lonesome!"

"Jacquette, you're wanted here," called Uncle Mac's voice, as she appeared. "The girls say you're to present this to Made-moiselle."

A silence fell in the room, as Jacquette took the tiny box from her uncle and bend-

Christmas

ing before the French teacher, said, simply,

“To our dear Mademoiselle, with the love of her little peacocks, Blanche, Etta, Mamie, Flo, Bess, the three Maries, and Jacquette.”

“My chickens! My little chickens!” Mademoiselle murmured, actually with tears in her eyes, as Jacquette opened the box and taking out an exquisite little necklace clasped it round Mademoiselle’s throat. But, the next minute, before the tears were dried, she and everyone else had begun to laugh together, for Uncle Mac had just announced impressively, “To Robin Sidney Drake, from his friend, Bud Banister: A photographic study, entitled ‘Bobs’s Rest-cure’”—and the picture which was being passed from one to the other had proved to be nothing else than a small snap-shot of the barred gymnasium windows at Marston High.

Then, suddenly, when it was merriest,

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the laugh faltered. There stood Clarence Mullen, in the middle of the room, awkward and uncomfortable. Bud had never thought of such a thing as his being there, when he had planned his little joke.

For an instant, no one made a sound. Then Bobs clapped the younger boy on the shoulder, and cried out, "Come on, Clarence—laugh with us! That's all past and gone. Besides, the rest-cure did me a lot of good, I tell you, boy!"

"I believe it, Bobs," Marquis chimed in, taking the cue. "We were all half crazy that day. A quiet half hour alone might have helped some of the rest of us. Don't you say so, Mademoiselle?"

"Not a doubt of it, my lambkin!" she agreed, so emphatically that the laugh was turned on Marquis, much to his own delight. As soon as his voice could be heard, he said,

"Once, that would have crushed me, Mademoiselle. I never thought to live to

Christmas

see the day when I shouldn't be afraid of you."

"You haven't lived to see it yet, sir," Louise Markham told him, saucily. "Not one of us ever will. I've been trembling all the evening for fear she'd say something about my laugh."

"Dearie, am I so ferocious?" Mademoiselle reproached her with a soft, upward glance.

"Oh, I know exactly how you feel, Louise!" Jacquette cried, with a roguish nod. "Haven't you noticed the way I tip-toe around? That's all owing to something Mademoiselle did, the first week I was at Marston. I happened to come into the study-room and walk across the floor after everyone was seated, and she just shook her head at me and said, very solemnly, as if she were talking to herself, 'And she so fair—so blonde!' Then she went to the blackboard and wrote, 'The light girl with the heavy tread—alas!'"

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

Everybody laughed except Bobs. He was glancing down at Jacquette's white slippers and whispering, "As if Cinderella ever had a heavy tread!"

"That venomous little old French lady!" Mademoiselle murmured, shaking her head.

"Oh, I deserved it!" Jacquette went on gaily, answering Bobs, but looking at Mademoiselle. "That was mild, though, compared with what you said to Flo the time she complained in class that her mother made her do too much housework and didn't leave her time to study her French. Do you remember, Flo?"

"Do I!" said Flo expressively.

"Tell us, Flo," Bud Banister put in, grinning in advance.

"Oh, she just looked me over, calmly, and then said in her sweetest tone, 'Throw her in the lake, honey—throw her in the lake! That's what mothers are for—to throw in the lake!'"

Christmas

“Mr. Granville! Mr. Granville!” Mademoiselle raised her voice and appealed to Uncle Mac out of the gale around her. “Isn’t it time for something else to happen?”

“Yes, Mademoiselle,” he answered from the other end of the room, lifting his head from a whispered consultation with the three Maries. “Something else is going to happen right away. Jacquette, my dear, will you stand here?” he added, stepping forward and placing his niece directly in front of the tree.

As she stood there surprised, expectant, with the broad green branches spreading behind her, Mary Elliott dropped a red silk cushion on the floor at her feet, and Jacquette, required to kneel on the cushion, saw the other Maries coming toward her, bearing a wonderful diadem of gold filagree, set with sparkling rhinestones, and suddenly found herself being crowned Queen with all pomp and ceremony.

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

The room was absolutely still until the glittering circlet was finally placed on the fair bent head. Then came a burst of applause.

“Long live the Queen!” called somebody. “Vive la Reine!” cried somebody else, and as Jacquette rose to her feet, everyone took up the words together.

For one instant, the startled Queen looked at the doorway, but, before she could fly, Uncle Mac had stepped forward and slipped his arm around her.

“Friends,” he said, in a voice very different from the rollicking one he had been speaking in all the evening. Then he held up his right hand until the cheering had been silenced. “Friends,” he said again, “this act of devotion to our little girl has touched me deeply. I’m glad you all know that she’s a brave little Queen, but I think perhaps you don’t all know what I’m going to tell you. I rode out from town last night with Mr. Branch, your principal.

Christmas

He said to me that there had been a wonderful revolution of sentiment at Marston, in regard to secret societies, and he says he gives the credit for it almost entirely to the personal influence of one girl."

"Oh, Uncle Mac—*please!*" Jacquette implored, but his arm held her close, and he went on firmly,

"Mr. Branch says that when this girl made up her mind it was right for her to leave her sorority, she fully expected all her friends to turn against her. They didn't. Instead of that, two or three of them went out with her on the spot, and, somehow, the respect for her motives was such that, instead of dishonourably expelling her and the others who withdrew, as would naturally have been done according to the rules of the organisation, it was agreed to let them resign quietly. That isn't all. Right here in our own little circle I want to tell you the whole story. Mr. Branch says this girl has gone

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

on in her high-school work, making a splendid record; she has kept all her old friends, and made new ones; and the result of her steadfast, womanly course is that, yesterday, all the remaining members of her old sorority came to Branch in his office, and told him that they had decided to disband the Marston chapter of Sigma Pi Epsilon, on account of the example set them by Jacquette Willard."

"Oh!" came a little gasping cry from Jacquette. Her face, under the glittering crown, was white with excitement, as her eyes flew from Blanche to Mamie—to Flo—to Etta. Not a Sigma Pi pin in sight. It was true!—it was true!

"Long live the Queen of us all!" cried a happy little treble from the arm-chair, and there sat Margaret Howland, too, without a sign of a Kappa Delta pin on her pink gown!

"Long live——" the rest began—but Jacquette's voice checked them.

Christmas

“Please—please listen—all of you!” she begged, with one white arm outstretched before her uncle as if barring his possible objection. “Let me tell you how it was. I haven’t done it. If I’ve ever helped anyone at all, it isn’t any credit to me—truly it isn’t. It’s—it’s Tia—and it’s Mademoiselle—it’s Louise and Bobs, and—little Mary! It’s—oh, it’s all of you!” Her voice broke suddenly, and without an instant’s warning she flew across to her little Aunt Sula, caught her in her arms, and whirling her to the doorway where the mistletoe hung thickest, kissed her again and again. The next minute they had both disappeared behind the portieres, and Jacquette was whispering,

“Tia, you’re crying! That’s why I brought you away. I saw you crying!”

“Yes, I know—but let me!” was the answer. “I love to cry—this way.”

“Now, this won’t do!” put in a third voice, and Bobs’s laughing face appeared

Jacquette, a Sorority Girl

between the curtains. "Oh!" he added, quickly, drawing back.

"It's all right, Bobs," whispered the tall young Queen, smiling through her tears, as she reached over Aunt Sula's shoulder to clasp his hand. "Just go back and keep them laughing for a minute, can't you? We—we're having the loveliest cry you ever heard of!"

FINIS.

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